

Articles & Summary

Index

Concepts in Bhagavad Gita

By S. N. Sastri

[Extracts from Sri Sankara's Bhashya dealing with some concepts in the Gita with explanatory notes by S. N. Sastri]

Contents:

Abbreviations
GSB - Gita Sankara Bhashya
Br.up - Brhadaranyaka upanishad
Ch.up - Chandogya upanishad
Sv.up - Svetasvatara upanishad
Tai.up - aittiriya upanishad

Adhyasa - Superimposition

GSB13 - 26 Kshetrakshetrajnayoh vishayavishayinoh - apagacchatimithyajnanam.
The body, which is referred to as the field and the Atma, the indwelling Self, referred to as the knower of the field in this verse are wrongly looked upon by us as equally real, though the body has no reality in the absolute sense. The Self [Brahman] is alone real. The body appears to be real in the same manner as, when a rope is mistaken for a snake, the illusory snake appears to be real. The snake is said to be superimposed on the rope. This is known as superimposition or Adhyasa. Similarly the identification of the body and the Self and looking upon the two as forming one entity is due to superimposition of the body on the Self. They are the object and the subject, respectively, and are of different natures. Their relationship is of the form of superimposition of each on the other as also of their qualities, as a consequence of the absence of discrimination between the real nature of the field and the knower of the field. This is like the association of a rope, nacre, etc, with the superimposed snake, silver, etc, owing to the absence of discrimination between them. The association of the field and the knower of the field in the form of superimposition is described as false knowledge [mithya jnanam]. Afterhaving known the distinction between, and the characteristics of, the field and the knower of the field according to the scriptures and having separated, like a stalk from the munja grass, the above - described knower of the field from the field whose characteristics have been shown earlier, he who realises the knower of the field, which, in accordance with 13.12 is devoid of all distinctions created by adjuncts - - as identical with Brahman and who has the firm realisation that the field is surely unreal like an elephant created by magic, a thing seen in dream, an imaginary city seen in the sky, etc. though it appears as real - - for him false knowledge becomes eradicated, since it is opposed to the right knowledge described above. [For further elucidation see 'The three levels of reality' on page21].

Ahankara

GSB.3.27 - Ahankara is looking upon the aggregate of body and organs as "I".

Atma - The Self

GSB - 2.18 - The Self is self - established. It is not revealed by any pramana, including the scriptures - Atma svatah siddhah - na tua jnatartha jnapakatvena...

The scripture becomes a Pramana or valid means of knowledge regarding the Self only by helping to eliminate the superimposition [on the Self] of the attributes alien to it, and not by revealing the Self directly as an object previously not known, [as Pratyaksha or direct perception does].

GSB.2.19 - The object of the Gita is to remove the cause of Samsara [transmigration], such as grief and delusion and not to enjoin action for its own sake. [Action is to be performed only as a means to the attainment of Self-knowledge through the purification of the mind.]

GSB.2.21 - The Self, while remaining immutable, is imagined to be the knower of objects such as sound, which are actually perceived by the intellect and the organs of sense. This is because the Self is not distinguished from the mental states, due to nescience.

Similarly, the Self is spoken of as having become enlightened only because of avidya [nescience] associating it with that intellectual perception - which is also unreal - which takes the form of discrimination between the Self and the not - Self, while in reality the Self has undergone no change whatever. [That is to say, neither ignorance nor its opposite, enlightenment, pertains to the Self. Both relate only to the intellect [or mind] and are wrongly attributed to the Self, which, however, is ever free from avidya or ignorance.].

G - 2.18 - The Atma cannot be known through any of the pramanas [means of knowledge] - see Sankarabhashya on ' aprameya' in Vishnu sahasranama. Being devoid of sound, form, taste, smell and touch, Atma cannot be known by pratyaksha pramana. Nor can it be known by anumana [inference] as it has no mark [linga] which can be the basis of inference. It cannot be known by upamana [analogy] as it has no parts and as analogy functions by comparing one part of a thing with the corresponding part of another thing.

Arthapatti [implication] too cannot apply. Atma cannot be known by the criterion of abhava [negation] because it is always existent and is the witness of all negation. Nor can Atma be known by means of the scriptures, because it is devoid of any peculiar features that can be deduced from the scriptures. Then it may be asked, how is it said [in Brahma sutra 1.1.3] that the scriptures are the valid source of knowledge of Brahman? The answer is - The Atma is the witness of all pramanas, being the Supreme light and so it cannot be the object of any means of knowledge; yet nescience

superimposes on Brahman something which it is not. What the scripture does is only to remove this superimposition. Then Brahman [or the Atma] shines in its own light.

GSB - 2.25 - As the self is inaccessible to any of the senses, it is not manifest.

GSB - 4.25 - The offering of the self in Brahman means the realisation that the indwelling self which is associated with the limiting adjuncts such as the body is identical with the supreme Brahman devoid of all limiting adjuncts. In this verse the word yajna is used in the sense of Atma.

GSB - 5.13 - The Self, by nature, is not an agent [doer], nor does it make the body and senses act. See also Gita 2.25, 13.31, and Br. Up. 4.3.7 -

Bhakti - an essential requisite for liberation

GSB - 2.39 - The Lord says - "You will get rid of your bondage by the attainment of Self-knowledge through God's grace.

GSB - 15.1 - [Introduction] - Yasmat madadhinam - moksham gacchanti. - those who worship Me with devotion attain liberation by My grace.

SB - 18.62 - Tam evalsvaram saranam - sasvatam nityam. - Take refuge in the Lord alone with your whole being for getting rid of the sufferings of this transmigratory existence and to attain the eternal supreme peace.

GSB - 18.65 - Here also the importance of devotion is stressed.
Brahma - sutra - 2.3.41 - SB thereon - Tadanugrahahetukena - bhavitum arhati. - Only through Self-knowledge attained by His grace does one become liberated.

The extracts from Sri Sankara's commentaries given above disprove the contention of some western scholars that there is no place for devotion to a personal God in Sri Sankara's philosophy.

Brahma - sakshatkara - Self - realisation

GSB - 18.50 - Purvapakshah - nanu vishayakaram - atmakaram jnanam iti anupapannam. -
Objection - Knowledge takes the form of its object. But it is not admitted anywhere that the Self is an object, or even that it has form.

Pseudo - vedantin - Do not such texts as - 'radiant like the sun' [Sv.3.8], 'of the nature of effulgence' [Ch.up.3.14.2] and 'self - effulgent' [Br.up.4.3.9] say that the Self has form?

Objection - No, because those sentences are meant to refute the idea that the Self is of the nature of darkness. - There is specific denial of form in 'formless' [Katha up.1.3.15] and also in Katha - 2.3.9, Sv.4.20, etc, which indicate that the Self is not an object of perception. Therefore it is illogical to say that there can be knowledge which takes the form of the Self.

Siddhanta [Vedantin] - Na, atyantanirmalatva - svacchatva - sukshmatvopapatteh atmanah - atmadrishtih kriyate. - No. Since it is established that the Self is supremely taintless, pure and subtle and that the intellect also can have taintlessness etc, like the Self, it stands to reason that the intellect can take a form resembling the Self, which is consciousness itself. The mind becomes impressed with the semblance of the intellect, the organs become impressed with the semblance of the mind and the body becomes impressed with the semblance of the organs. In other words the intellect, the mind, the organs of perception and action and the entire physical body, which are all really insentient matter, appear to be sentient because of the Self which is pure consciousness] This is why everyone identifies himself with his body - mind complex.

Atah atma vishayam jnanam - grhyamanatvat. - Hence, knowledge about the Self is not a matter for injunction. What has to be done is only the eradication of the superimposition of name, form, etc, which are not the Self and not the [acquisition of] knowledge of the Self. Knowledge of the Self means only the realisation that the Self [or Brahman] alone really exists and that all objects experienced are only superimposed on it, just like the illusory snake on a rope.

Tasmatavidyaadhyaropana - prasiddhatvat. - Therefore it is only the elimination of what has been superimposed on Brahman due to ignorance that has to be done. Since Brahman is self - luminous, it becomes manifest when the superimposition is removed with the help of the scriptures. It is therefore said here that no effort is necessary to attain knowledge of Brahman. All effort is only for removal of the wrong notion that the universe is absolutely real.

Avidya - kalpita - nama - rupa - avivekinam. - It is because the intellect is distracted by the names and forms which are conjured up due to nescience that Brahman, even though self - evident, easily realisable, nearer than all else and identical with oneself, appears to be concealed, difficult to realise, very far and different from oneself to the unenlightened.

- Bahyakaranivrtta - buddhinamtu - svasannam asti. But to those whose mind has been withdrawn from external objects and who have received the grace of a teacher, as well as acquired purity of mind, there is nothing more blissful, manifest, well - known, easily realised and nearer to oneself than the Self.

Tasmat bahya - akara - bheda - nivrttih.eva karanam. - Therefore, the cessation of the perception of differences in the form of external objects is alone the means for being established in the Self.

Tasmat yatha svadehasya - itisiddham - Therefore, just as for knowing one's own body there is no need of any other [external] means of knowledge, so also there is no need of any other means of knowledge for the realisation of the Self which is innermost. Hence it is established that steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self is a fact very well known to discriminating people.

Yesham api nirakaram jnanam - abhyupagantavyam -
Even to those who hold the view that knowledge is formless [the Bhatta - mimamsakas], and not cognised by direct perception, cognition of an object is dependent on knowledge. Hence it has to be admitted that knowledge [of the Self] can be as immediate as the experience of happiness and other states of the mind.

Paramahamsa - parivrajakah - Thisterm is found to be applied in the Gita - bhashya only to one who has attained Self - realisation - See 13.31, 18.53 and 18,66.

Karanam - Karyam - Cause and Effect

GSB - 2.16 - Vikarahca vyabhicarati - anupalabdheh as an. - Every effect is temporary .For instance, an effect such as an earthen pot, presented to consciousness by the eye, is not real, for it is not perceived apart from clay. Thus every effect is unreal, since it is never seen as distinct from its cause. An effect is not perceived before its production and after its destruction.

Dhyanam - Meditation

GSB - 13.24 - Dhyanam nama - Dhyanam.
Meditation means - contemplation [on the Self] after withdrawing into the mind the organs of hearing etc, from their objects such as sound and then withdrawing the mind into the indwelling self. It is a constant and uninterrupted current of thought like a line of pouring oil.

Jivanmukti

GSB - 2.51 - - ,5.24, - - 6.27 - - - 18.25 - - - Liberation consists in remaining identified with the changeless Self even while living in the present body. Liberation is not something to be attained after death..

Jnanam - Knowledge

Cannot be combined with karma -

GSB - 2.11 - Sankhyabuddhimyogabuddhim ca asritya dve nishthe vibhakte - pasyata - Thus, on the basis of the Sankhya and yoga standpoints, two distinct paths have been laid down by the Lord [in Gita - 3.3], considering the impossibility of Jnana and Karma being conjoined in the same person simultaneously, Jnana being based on the idea of non - agency and unity and Karma on the idea of agency and multiplicity.

Yasya tuajnanat ragadidoshatah va - yena buddheh samuccayah syat. - A person, who, having undertaken an action [with the sense of doer-ship], because of ignorance [of the Self], or due to defects like attachment, and having [even before the action has been completed] attained purity of mind [and consequently detachment - vairagya] as a result of the performance of sacrificial rites, the giving of gifts and the practice of austerities, [yajna,dana and tapa, - which lead to vividisha, the desire to know the Self - see Br. Up.4.4.22], realises the supreme Truth that he is Brahman, the non - doer, may still continue to perform the action [which he has been doing] in the same manner as before, solely with the object of setting an example to the world, in spite of having nothing to gain thereby. This is however only a semblance of action. [It is really akarma - inaction, since the notion of agency is no longer there - see Gita - 4.18]. It cannot therefore be said that there is a combination of Jnana and Karma here. [The doctrine of Jnana - Karma - samuccaya of the Mimamsakas and others is refuted here.]

Liberation is due to knowledge alone -

GSB.2.11 - TasmatGitasu kevalat - iti niscitah arthah - The definite conclusion of the Gita is therefore that liberation is attained by the knowledge of the Reality alone and not by knowledge combined with action. [Once the knowledge of the Reality has arisen, liberation follows immediately and action or karma is no longer necessary].

GSB - 2.21 - 'Manasaivanudrashtavyam' iti sruteh - [Br. Up. 4.4.19]. - karanam. - The sruti says - 'It can be known by the mind alone'. The mind, refined by sama, dama, etc, and equipped with the teachings of the scripture and of the guru is the means for the realisation of the Self.

GSB - Introduction - Tasya asya Gita sastrasya - dharmat bhavati. - The aim of the Gita is the attainment of supreme bliss, a complete cessation of samsara , along with its cause. This is attained by being established in the knowledge of the Self., preceded by the renunciation of all works [by the knowledge that the Self is not an agent and that all action pertains only to the body - mind complex].

GSB - 2.11 - Pandaatmavishaya buddhih - iti sruteh. - 'Panda' means 'knowledge of the Self'. Those who have it are Panditah - vide the sruti - 'securing the status of knowers of the Self - [Br. Up. 3.5.1].

GSB - 2.16 - Tattvadarsinah - The word 'Tat' is a pronoun, known in Sanskrit as sarvanama, which also means 'the name of the "all"'. Brahman is "all' and so the name of Brahman is 'Tat'. The real nature of Brahman is therefore 'Tattvam'. Those who see that Brahman are therefore 'Tattvadarsinah'.

GSB - 2.69 - Tatraapi pravartaka - pramana - abhave - sambhavati. - [the validity of all pramanas holds good only so long as knowledge of the Self has not arisen].

Pramatrtvam hi atmanah - iva prabodhe. - Once the Self is realised, it is known as bereft of all limiting adjuncts and is therefore no longer looked upon as a seer, etc. The Self is just pure consciousness. It becomes a seer, hearer, etc, only when looked upon as associated with the limiting adjuncts in the form of the body, etc. After the eradication of this wrong association by the knowledge of the real nature of the Self, attained through the teachings of the Vedas, the Vedas themselves cease to be authoritative for such a person. This is like the objects seen in a dream becoming non - existent on waking up. The sruti which is valid in the state of ignorance [of the Self], and whose injunctions and prohibitions are binding, loses its validity in the case of a person who has realised the Self, even though the realisation was achieved only with the help of the sruti.

GSB - 3.1 - Tasmat kevalat eva jnanat - sarvopanishatsu ca. - Hence, the definite conclusion in the Gita and all the Upanishads is that liberation follows from knowledge of the Self alone.

GSB - 3.3 - Jnanam eva yogah jnanayogah - Jnana itself is the means [to liberation].
In the words Jnanayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Karmayoga, the word 'yoga' signifies - 'the means to unity' - yujyate anena iti yogah.

GSB - 3.3 - Jnananishtha tu karmanishthopaya - labdhatmika - anya - anapeksha - .
Steadfastness in knowledge [of the Self], having come into existence through the means of steadfastness in action [karma], leads to liberation independently, without depending on anything else.

GSB - 3.4 - Naishkarmyam - svarupena eva avasthanam - 'Freedom from action' is the state of being established in the knowledge of the Self and abiding as the action - less Self.

GSB - 3.4 - Karmayogopayatvam - pratipadanat - Karma yoga is the means to the yoga of knowledge characterized by freedom from action, as has been established in the Upanishads as well as in the Gita -

GSB - 3.4 - Na kevalat karmaparityaga - matrat - prapnoti - By the mere renunciation of action without the knowledge [of the Self], steadfastness in the yoga of knowledge, characterized by freedom from action [naishkarmya] cannot be attained.

GSB - 3.41 - Jnanam sastratah - avabodhah. - Jnana means knowledge about the Self derived from the scriptures and one's teacher [intellectual knowledge].
Vijnanam viseshatahtadanubhavah - Vijnana means the realisation as an actual experience of that intellectual knowledge, the realisation in the form 'I am Brahman'.

GSB - 4.19 - Karmadau akarmadi - darsanam jnanam - Seeing action as non - action [i.e. knowing that the Self does not perform any action], is 'jnanam'. See Gita 4.18.

GSB - 4.28 - Jnanam sastrartha - parijnanam - Here the word 'Jnana' is used in the sense of mere book knowledge.

GSB - 5.12 - Sattvasuddhi - nishthakramenaiti vakyaseshah. - Liberation is attained through the stages of purification of the mind, acquisition of knowledge [paroksha - jnanam], renunciation of all action [which really means, looking upon all action [karma] as non - action [akarma], since they are performed by the body and not by the Self] and remaining as the pure Self devoid of all adjuncts.

GSB - 6.8 - Jnanamsastrokta - padarthanam - svanubhavakaranam - nana is intellectual knowledge of what is taught by the sruti. Vijnana is making that knowledge the subject of one's own experience. To know Brahman is to be Brahman, that is, to realise that one is Brahman.

See also GSB - 6.46 and 16.1 for the meaning of the word 'Jnana'.

Kama and Raga

See GSB - 7.11 for the meanings.

Tulapurushadih

GSB - 11.48 - The reference here is to 'Tulabharam', well known in Kerala temples.

Karma - Action

Sri Sankara takes the word 'karma' in the Gita as meaning generally the various rites laid down in the srutis and smrtis only and not secular activities. In some verses where he considers that both religious and secular activities are meant, he specifically says so.

GSB - 2.11 - Itiavidyakamavata eva sarvani karmani srautadini darsitani - .Thus the Vedic rites are intended only for him who has not attained knowledge of the Self and who has therefore desires to be fulfilled.

GSB - 2.21 - Vidushahkarma - asambhava - vacanat - avagamyate - From the assertion of the impossibility of action in the case of an enlightened man, the conclusion of the Lord is evident that the acts enjoined by the scriptures are intended only for the unenlightened.

Difference between knowledge and action.

GSB - 2.21 - Agnihotradi - anushtheyambhavati - There remains something for the unenlightened man to do, after having understood the meaning of the injunction regarding Agnihotra, etc. This action, namely Agnihotra or other sacrificial rites, requires the acquisition of many necessary accessories. The unenlightened man, while performing such actions, has the idea "I am the performer, this is my duty". Nothing, however, remains to be performed subsequent to the realisation of the truth of such teachings as are contained in 2.20,etc, regarding the real nature of the Self.

GSB - Introduction - Abhyudayarthahapi - phalabhisandhi - varjitah - Though the rites laid down in the Vedas are intended to confer on the performer various benefits, such as worldly prosperity, enjoyment of the pleasures of heaven after the present life and the like, the performance of the same rites without desire for these benefits and in a spirit of dedication to God brings about purity of the mind and makes the person fit for Self-knowledge. Suddha sattvasya - pratipadyate - Since such work purifies the mind and makes it fit for the dawn of knowledge, it is also indirectly the means to the attainment of liberation.

GSB - 2.46 - Tasmatprak jnananishtha - adhikara - prapteh - kartavyam - Therefore, for a man who is ignorant of the Self it is necessary to perform action before he becomes fit for the path of knowledge.

GSB - 2.47 - Karmani eva adhikarah - avasthayam ityarthah - You [Arjuna and all others who have not yet become fit for the path of jnana] are qualified for action alone. And, while performing action, let there be no craving for the fruit. [This verse is very often misinterpreted as laying down the performance

of action for its own sake. From the context it is however clear that what is brought out is the contrast between the paths of knowledge and action. As long as one has not attained purity of mind, that is to say, one has not developed total detachment, one has to practise Karma yoga. The path of Jnana is only for those who have acquired total detachment towards all enjoyments. This is reiterated indifferent words in Gita - 6.3].

Yada hikarmaphala - trshna - prayuktah - bhavet - When a person performs action with desire for the fruit thereof, then he will be subject to rebirth in order to experience the fruit of that action, [because the fruits of all actions cannot be experienced in the same life].
[This verse makes it clear that karma yoga, or the performance of all actions without desire for the fruit and as an offering to God, is meant only for those who yearn for liberation. The argument is often heard that all action is motivated by the expectation of reward in some form or other and so it is unrealistic to expect people to work without desire. This argument overlooks the fact that Karma yoga is not advocated for everyone, but only for those very few who are not interested in the pleasures of worldly life, but yearn only for liberation. Of course, performance of action in the spirit of Karma yoga is good even for the purely worldly - minded, as thereby they can enjoy mental tranquility and freedom from tension.].

GSB - 2.48 - Yogasthah san kuru - tyaktva Dhananjaya - Steadfast in yoga, perform action merely for God's sake, casting off even such thoughts as - "May God be pleased", and being equanimous in success and failure.
Kah asauyogah - yoga ucyate - What is this yoga which Arjuna has been advised to practice while performing action? The answer is - Yoga is evenness of mind in success and failure. Here yoga means karma yoga.

GSB - 2.50 - Buddhiyuktah - yujyasvaghatasva - A person who has evenness of mind casts off in this world both punya [merit] and papa [sin] by the attainment of mental purity and, as a result, knowledge of the Self. Therefore devote yourself to Karma yoga, the wisdom of equanimity.

GSB - 2.50 - The correct meaning of the statement - 'Yogah karmasu kausalam' is, according to the Bhashya - Yoga is skill in the performance of action. The evenness of mind in success and failure arising from the mental attitude of surrender of the fruit of all work to God is what is here described as skill in action. This is because by such evenness of mind actions which are by nature the cause of bondage are converted into an effective means for the purification of the mind and the attainment of Self-knowledge.
[This is another verse which is often wrongly interpreted as meaning that efficiency in the performance of any action is Yoga. This interpretation will be found to be totally untenable if it is remembered that performance of action is advocated in the Gita only as a means to the attainment of liberation and not

as a means for worldly success. It is another matter that such an interpretation can be used to urge people to perform their duties efficiently, but that would be tearing the verse out of context].

GSB - 2.69 - Atah karmani - karmahetutvopapattih - See translation given under Sthitaprajna.

GSB - 3.1 - Natavat nityanam - sajjanma - asambhava - sruteh - It cannot be imagined that sin, which is a positive entity, can be generated from the mere on - performance of obligatory duties [nitya and naimittika karma], because of the Upanishadic text, "How can existence come out of non-existence?" [Ch. Up. 6.2.2], which speaks of the impossibility of the birth of existence from non-existence.

GSB - 3.3 - Karma - nishthayah - na svatantryena - Action is a means to liberation only by virtue of being the cause of the attainment of knowledge and not independently. [Knowledge of the Self is alone the direct and independent cause of liberation].
In the words Karma - yoga, Jnana - yoga and Bhakti - yoga, the word 'yoga' is used in the sense of' the means to union' - yujyate anena iti yogah.

GSB - 3.4 - Yajnadinamiha janmani - jnananishtha - hetunam - Vedic rites, such as sacrifices, performed in the present life or in past lives are the cause of the purification of the mind. Thereby they become the cause of steadfastness in Self-knowledge.
Jnanam utpadyate pumsam - atmani - Knowledge arises in a person after the attenuation of sins. One sees the Self in oneself like the reflection in a clean mirror.

GSB - 3.9 - Karma yoga is the performance of action without desire for the fruit and as an offering to God. This verse contains a complete definition of Karma yoga. It is clear from this verse that there is the sense of agency [doer-ship] in Karma yoga.
In Gita verses 3.4 to 3.8 it has been emphasized that a person should engage himself in the path of action till he attains Self-knowledge. The evils arising from non - performance of action are brought out inverses 3.9 to 3.16.

GSB - 3.17 - The ideas contained in Br up 3.5.1 are brought out here.

GSB - 3.19 - Asaktah - sattvasuddhidvarena ityarthah - By performing actions without attachment and as an offering to God a person attains purity of mind. Then he attains liberation through Self-knowledge.

GSB - 3.30 - MayiVasudeve - buddhya - Dedicating all actions to Me, who am Vasudeva, the omniscient supreme Lord, the Self of all, with the mind intent

on the Self, with discriminating wisdom, with the thought 'I am an agent and I do this action for God as His servant' and being free from expectation of any reward - It is clear from this that in Karma yoga there is the sense of agency.

GSB - 4.14 - Iti evamyah anyah - bhavanti ityarthah - Anyone else, too, who knows Me as his own Self and knows 'I am not the performer of action and I do not hanker after the fruit', does not become bound by actions. For him actions cease to be the cause of further bodies.

GSB - 4.15 - Tasmattvam purvaih - nirvartitam - Till the attainment of Self-knowledge actions are necessary for the purification of the mind. After the dawn of knowledge also actions should continue to be performed in order to set an example to others and to prevent them from taking a wrong path.

GSB - 4.17 - Karma is action enjoined by the scriptures, Vikarma is prohibited action and Akarma is inaction, which means action performed with the realisation that the Self is not the doer.

GSB - 4.18 - Na api nityanam - darsitam. - No evil, which is a positive entity, can arise from the non - performance of nitya karma, which is negative. See also Tai. Up.1.1 - Introduction - Nityanam ca akaranam abhavah -

GSB - 4.20 - Sahkutascit nimittat - A person who has already attained Self-knowledge may continue to perform action, but that is really Akarma, inaction and is only for the welfare of the world.
Vidusha kriyamanam karma - In reality, actions performed by a Jnani are a karma since he is the action less Self.

GSB - 4.22 - Lokavyavahara - samanya - darsanena - akarta eva - Seeing similarity with common human behaviour, agency is attributed to a Jnani by ordinary people; but from his own point of view he is not a Karta, performer of action. [See examples given in Pancadasi - 7.259].

GSB - 5.1 - [Introduction] - Atra ucyate atmavidah - asambhavah syat - For the knower of the Self, since mithya - jnana - nescience - has been eradicated, karma yoga, which is based on nescience, becomes impossible. [This again establishes that karma yoga involves the notion of agency.]

Janmadisarvavikriya - rahitatvena - uktamsyat - It is clear from this passage that Atma jnananishtha is the same as Sarva karma sannyasa - that is, all Karma becomes in reality Akarma. In other words, Sarva karma sannyasa is not giving up all action, but it is the realisation that all Karma is performed only by the body - mind complex and that the Self is only an uninvolved witness.

In2.17, 2.19 and 2.21, it has been stated that the Jnani is not an agent, since he has realised that he is not the body or the mind, but he is the action - less Self.
Anatmavitkartrka - karma yoga nishthatah - prthak - karanat - In this passage karma yoga which is applicable only to those who are ignorant of the Self is distinguished from Jnana yoga, characterised by dwelling in the state of identity with the action less Self.

GSB - 6.3 - Here it is made clear that karma yoga is not applicable to one who has attained Self-knowledge. Here Yogarudha means one who has attained Self-knowledge.

GSB - 5.3 - Karmayogi nityasannyasi - A Karma yogi who is free from attachment and aversion is considered to be a Sannyasi, a man of renunciation, even though engaged in action. [This is actually said as a praise of karma yoga].

GSB - 5,10 - Yah tupunah atattvavit - sarva karmani - One who is ignorant of the Self and is engaged in karma yoga, who surrenders all actions to God with the idea 'I am working for Him, as a servant for his master' and renouncing attachment even to liberation, does not incur any bondage because of his actions, just as a lotus leaf, even while remaining in water, does not become wet.

GSB - 5.11 - Mamatvavarjitaih - sattvasuddhayeityarthah - Here also it is clear that there is the sense of agency, though there is no craving for the fruit.

GSB - 5.13 - Sarvani karmani - tishthati sukham - Having given up all karma - nitya, naimittika and kamya - through discriminating wisdom, that is, by looking upon karma as a karma - - - - here also it is clear that giving up all actions only means realising that one is the Self which does not act and that all actions are done only by the body. This is the meaning of Sarva karma sannyasa.

GSB - 6.1 [Introduction] - Nityasya ca karmanah - We have said that since the nitya karmasare laid down by the Vedas, they must produce some result. [The result is
purification of the mind or heaven].

GSB - 6.3 - Dhyana yogasya - darsayati - Since karma yoga is the means to make the mind fit for dhyana yoga, it is praised as Sannyasa.

GSB - 12.12 - Kamah ca sarve - santihiti - 'All desires' means the fruits of all rites and duties enjoined in the Srutis and Smrtis. From the renunciation of these, peace comes immediately to the enlightened man.

GSB - 12.13 - Atra caatmesvarabhedam - samuddharta iti - The yoga consisting in the concentration of the mind on God as the Cosmic Person, as also the performance of actions etc, for God have been spoken of by assuming a difference between God and Self. Karma yoga is not possible for the meditator on the Immutable, who is aware of the identity of the Self with God. The Lord is similarly pointing out the impossibility of the karma yogin's meditation on the Immutable. In verse 12.4, having declared that those who meditate on the Immutable are independent so far as the attainment of liberation is concerned, the Lord shows in12.7 that others are dependent on God.

GSB - 13.31 - Ataetasmin - bhagavata - It has been declared by the Lord in various places that there is no duty enjoined on those who have attained to the discriminating knowledge of the supreme Reality, who remain steadfast in that knowledge, who have rejected all actions arising out of nescience [presumably all desire - prompted actions] and who are Paramahamsa - parivrajakas. [In this Bhashya this term seems to mean only a person who has become a Jivan mukta and not necessarily one who belongs to a particular order of Sannyasis].

GSB - 18.3 - Yetu paramarthadarsinah - The enlightened ones who have realised the supreme truth are alone competent for steadfastness in knowledge, or Jnana yoga, which is characterized by the renunciation of all action [which means realising that one is the actionless Self, the uninvolved witness of all the actions done by the body]. The path of action or Karma yoga is not for such a person.

GSB - 18.6 - Etani api tukarmani - .uttamam - Even the actions such as sacrifice, charity and austerity have to be performed without attachment to the result.

GSB - 18.9 - Nityanam karmanam - phalam ca iti - We said that the Lord's utterance is proof of the fruitfulness of nitya and naimittika karma. Or, even if these are considered to be devoid of any fruit, since no fruit is mentioned in the Sruti, still the ordinary, unenlightened man does certainly imagine that these produce a result in the form of purification of the mind or avoidance of evil. The Lord indicates by the words 'giving up the fruit' that even this thought should be given up. This giving up of attachment and fruit in respect of Nityakarma arises from Sattva guna. [See commentary of Anandagiri on Br.up.1.3.1].

GSB - 18.10 - In this verse the term 'Akusalam karma' has been interpreted by Sri Sankara as meaning 'Kamya karma' and 'Kusalam karma' as 'Nitya karma'. This is in conformity with his interpretation of the word 'kausalam' in Gita 2.50. The gist of this verse is - The man of renunciation does not hate

Kamya karma on the ground that it will lead to bondage and further birth. Nor does he become attached to Nitya karma, thinking that it is the means to liberation. In short, he is totally free from likes and dislikes.

Kada punah asau - samyuktah ityetat - When is it that a person becomes free from aversion towards 'Akusalam karma' or Kamya karma and attachment towards 'Kusalam karma' or Nitya karma? That happens when he has become imbued with Sattva guna, which is the means to the knowledge that discriminates between the Self and the not-Self.

GSB - 18.10 - Yah adhikrtah purushah - slokenauktam - The person, who, being competent to perform rites, practises Karma yoga attains purity of mind and realises that he is the Self which does not act and is free from all modifications such as birth, growth, etc. This is the state of 'Naish karmya'.

GSB - 18.11 - Yahpunah adhikrtah san - na tattyage - On the other hand, for the un-enlightened person, who identifies himself with the body and has the firm conviction that he is the doer, it is not possible to give up actions totally. He should perform actions without desire for the fruit.

GSB - 18.46 - God is the Antaryami.

GSB - 18.66 - Nityanamca karmanam - The Sruti says that Nitya karmas have heaven as their result. See also Ch.up. 2.23.1 and Br.up. 1.5.16. See also Note no. 5on page 6 of Mahesh Research Institute edition of Br. upanishad where it is said that heaven is the result of Nitya karma.

Madhusudana Sarasvati says in his commentary on Gita 18.6 - Kamya karma also produces purity, but that is only the purity necessary for reaping the result of that karma and not the purity necessary for attaining Self-knowledge. The Vartikakara [Suresvara] says - Even for enjoying the pleasures of heaven purity is necessary; a pig cannot enjoy heavenly joys.

Krishna is Atma

GSB - 4.14 - Itievam yah anyah - bhavanti - Anyone else too, who knows Me thus, as his own self, and realises that he is not a doer and has no craving for the fruits of actions [performed by the body] incurs no bondage. His actions cease to be the cause of further birth. In verses 4.9 and9.11 also, what is said about Krishna should be taken as applying also to every individual [contd. on p.21].

For the meaning of the word 'Krishna' see GSB - 6.34. See also Narayaneeyam - Dasaka 44, verse 5.'Krs' stands for Existence and 'na' for Bliss. The union of the two is Krsna, the Supreme Brahman.

In Gita 4.9 the Lord says that anyone who knows the truth about His birth and action will be liberated. The truth is that He is the Atma, which has no birth and does not act. The real meaning of this verse, therefore, is that one who realises that he too, like Krishna, is really the Atma and that he has neither birth nor any activity will become liberated. The interpretation that by merely hearing the accounts of the Lord's incarnations and the deeds performed by Him one can get liberation ignores the significance of the word 'tattvatah' which means ' in reality.'

In Gita 9.11 the Lord says that fools disregard him, taking him to be just an ordinary human being. Interestingly, an almost identical statement is made by Kapila, another incarnation of the Lord, in Srimad Bhagavatam, Skandha 3,ch.29, verse 21. There Kapila says that he, as Brahman or Atma, dwells in every living being, but unaware of this, people worship only images, thinking that God is only there. A comparison of these two verses shows that the meaning of both is the same. The real meaning of Gita 9.11 is not that people do not recognize Krishna as the Lord, but that they do not realise that Krishna, as the Atma, dwells in every living being. Gita verses 9.12 and 13 are comparable in their real import to verses22 to 25 of ch.29 of Skandha 3 of the Bhagavata. The real meaning of the Gita verses 4.9, 4.14 and 9.11 is thus much more profound than what appears on a superficial reading.

Vairagyam - Detachment

GSB - 6.35 - Vairagyamnama - vaitrshnyam - Vairagyam means being free from any hankering after enjoyments because of the realisation of their evil consequences.

GSB - 15.1 [Introduction] Viraktasya hi - na anyasya - Only a person with complete detachment can realise God.

Mumukshutvam - Yearning for Liberation

GSB - 4.11 - Nahi ekasya - sambhavati - It is impossible for the same person to be a seeker of liberation and also a seeker of the fruits of action at the same time. The idea is that only a person who is totally free from any desire for the pleasures of this world as well as of higher worlds can be termed a mumukshu.

Sri Sankara says here that God's grace is necessary for attaining Self-knowledge and liberation. This disproves the contention of some that there is no place for devotion in Sri Sankara's Advaita.

GSB - 4.21 - Dharmah api mumukshoh - Even Punya is an obstacle to a seeker of liberation because it also causes bondage and further birth.

Omkarah

GSB - 8.12 - Parasya Brahmanah - arabhyate - Om is presented as a name of the supreme Brahman and also as Its symbol, like an image. Meditation on Om leads to liberation in course of time. [Krama mukti].

GSB - 8.13 - Omiti ekaksharam - mriyate - Uttering the single syllable Om, which is the name and the symbol of Brahman, and thinking of Me, at the time of death, one attains the supreme Goal.

Prakrtih - The Nature [of a person]

GSB - 3.33 - Prakrtihnama - abhivyaktah - Nature means the impressions of virtue, vice, knowledge, desires, etc, acquired in past lives which become manifest at the beginning of the present life.

Svabhavah

GSB - 5.14 - Svabhavah tu svo bhavah - maya - Nature - one's own nature, characterized as ignorance, or Maya.

GSB - 7.20 - Svabhavah - viseshah - Nature - the particular tendencies gathered in past lives.

GSB - 8.3 - Here 'svabhava' means the presence of the supreme Brahman in every body as the indwelling self.

GSB - 13.29 - - - Here Prakrti means God's Maya, constituted of the three Gunas.

Paramam Padam

GSB - 2.51 - Padam - mokshakhyam - the supreme state of Vishnu, called Liberation.

GSB - 8.21 - Dhama sthanam - padam - that supreme state of Vishnu.

See commentary of Madhusudana Sarasvati on Gita 2.51 - 'My state' means Vishnu's own real nature. The expression ''My state' is used by making an imaginary difference between Vishnu and His state as in the expression 'the head of Rahu'. Rahu being the head alone, the expression 'Rahu's head' implies a difference between Rahu and his head, which is really not there.

Prarabdha karma

GSB - 4.37 - Samarthyatyena karmana - kurute - The result of the past karma which produced the present birth gets exhausted only through being experienced. Self-knowledge destroys only the actions of past lives which have not begun to take effect and the actions performed in this life up to the dawn of knowledge. Actions performed after the dawn of knowledge do not produce any result at all.

GSB - 13.23 - Teshammukteshuvat - Prarabdha karma has already begun producing results, like an arrow that has been shot. Other karma is rendered unproductive by knowledge.

Prana, Apana, etc

GSB - 4.29 - Mukhanasikabhyam - The outgoing of breath through the mouth and nostrils is the movement of Prana; the movement of Apana is the going in of breath. Prana is exhalation and Apana is inhalation.

Purusha

GSB - 8.4 - Purnam anena - sayanat va - He by whom all things are pervaded, or he who dwells in everything is the Purusha.

GSB - 8.22 - The same as the above.

Samadhih

GSB - 2.44 - In this verse Samadhih means the mind.

GSB - 2.53 - Samadhiyate - That in which the mind is fixed is Samadhih. Here it means the Self.

GSB - 2.54 - Here the word Samadhisthah means one who is absorbed in the Self.

Sankhyam/Sankhyah

GSB - 2.11 - Asocyanityadina - The real nature of the Self as expounded in verses 11 to30 of chapter 2 by the Lord is known as Sankhya and the intellectual conviction of the truth expounded therein - that the Self is not a doer, because of the absence in It of such changes as birth - is known as the Sankhya - buddhi. Those who have this knowledge are called Sankhyas.

GSB - 2.21 - Tasmatviseshitasya - adhikarah - Therefore the enlightened man and the seeker after liberation [one who desires liberation alone and not anything else in this world or other worlds] who know that the Self is not a doer are called upon to renounce all actions. ['Renouncing actions' should be taken to mean only giving up the notion of agency [doer-ship] in actions performed by the body - mind complex and looking upon oneself as a mere witness]. It is however added here that the Mumukshu should perform the actions enjoined on him by the scriptures, these actions being not prejudicial to his goal, which is the attainment of Self-knowledge.

The idea is that, while a person who has already become a Jnani can give up even the actions enjoined by the scriptures, since they are not obligatory for him, a person who is in the stage of a Mumukshu is bound by the injunctions of the scriptures and should therefore perform the enjoined actions, but without the notion that he is the doer. A Jnani may also perform karma, but that is only to set an example to others, since he has nothing to gain thereby. Sri Sankara generally takes the word 'karma' as referring only to those spoken of in the Sruis and Smrtis, namely, Nitya, Naimittika and Kamya, the obligatory daily and occasional duties and the actions laid down to fulfill specific desires . In certain contexts, where he considers that secular activities also come within the scope of the word 'karma' he specifically says so.

The scheme of the Gita, as of the Upanishads, is that there are three stages. The first is that of the Karmayogi, who performs all actions without craving for the fruit, but has the sense of doer-ship. This is the Arurukshu, mentioned in Gita 6.3. The next higher is that of the Mumukshu, who looks upon himself as the action - less Self and a mere witness of the actions performed by the body - mind - complex. This is the Yogarudha stage Here an effort is necessary to keep the mind fixed on the Self. This is what is spoken of as Sama in Gita 6.3, which is the same as Jnana yoga. As stated in Gita 6.4, this stage is reached when there is total detachment and the only desire is for liberation. This is the Vividisha mentioned in Br up.4.4.22. The highest is that of the Jnani, to whom the conviction that he is the action - less Self has become natural, having been acquired by the assiduous practice of the disciplines such as control of the mind and senses, etc. See also GSB - 2.55 where it is said that the characteristics of the Jnani are to be acquired by the aspirant by effort. While Sri Sankara takes the word 'Karma' to mean only the actions laid down in the Srutis and Smrtis, Swami Vivekananda, Lokamanya Tilak and other modern expounders take it as including all secular activities also. This has the advantage of making the teaching fully relevant to the present - day social conditions and applicable to all human beings, irrespective of religion, caste and other considerations. The three stages mentioned above hold good with this interpretation also.

GSB - 2.21 - Tasmat Gitasastre - na karmani - .For the knower of the Self renunciation is prescribed and not action.

Sannyasa and Tyaga

GSB - 18.2 - Kamyanamasvamedhadinam - Some learned people are of the view that Sannyasa means the giving up of Kamya karma alone and that Tyaga is the abandonment of the fruits of the nitya and naimittika karma.

Madhusudana Sarasvati, in his commentary, says - One view is that in the statement - Tametam vedanuvacanena - anasakena - [Br. up. 4.4.22] - the duty of the Brahmacari is indicated by the word 'vedanuvacana' the duty of the householder by the words 'yajna' and 'dana' and the duty of the vanaprastha by the words 'tapa' and 'anasaka'. These refer only to the obligatory duties of each of these categories of persons. According to this view, an aspirant for mental purity as a means to knowledge and liberation should perform only the obligatory duties laid down for his Asrama, as an offering to God and should completely abandon all Kamya karma.

Another view is that all the Nitya, Naimittika and Kamya karma laid down should be performed, without desire for the fruit. Even those karmas laid down for the fulfillment of specific desires, such as the attainment of heaven, will lead to mental purification and fitness for knowledge of the Self if performed without desire. [This is according to what is known as Sam yoga - prthaktva - nyaya. See also Samkshepasarirakam - 1.64].

To sum up - the first view is that, since obligatory duties alone lead to the desire to know Brahman [vividisha], Kamya karma is to be completely abandoned. The second viewis that Kamya karma should also be performed, but without desire for the fruit.

Sattva

Increase of Sattva guna leads to increased manifestation of Consciousness.

Gita - 10.41 - Why is it said here that whatever is great, prosperous or powerful is a product of a part of His splendour, while the Srutis say that everything is Brahman? The answer is found in GSB - 15.12.

GSB - 15.12 - Adityadishuhi - adhikam iti - Since, in the sun etc, the Sattva is very much in evidence, they are specifically mentioned. It does not mean that Consciousness [or Brahman] is only there.

Yatha hiloke - Indeed, as a face is reflected only in a polished surface like a mirror and not in wood or in a wall, Consciousness [or divinity] is more manifest in some [where Sattva is in abundance].

Sthitaprajnah

GSB - 2.54 - Sthitapratishthita - One whose realisation of the form 'I am the supreme Brahman' remains steady is a Sthita prajna, a man of steady wisdom.

GSB - 2.55 - Sarvatraeva hi - bhavanti tani - In all the scriptures dealing with spirituality, the characteristics of the man of realisation are themselves presented as the disciplines for an aspirant. It is by assiduously practicing these disciplines that the man of realisation has attained that state.

Svadharmah - what is it?

Brahmasutra bhashya - 3.4.40 - Yo hi yam prati vidhiyate - sakyate - One's own duty is that which has been prescribed [by the scriptures] for one and not what one can perform well, since duty is determined by scriptural injunction. [This definition obviously applies only to the actions laid down in the Srutis and the Smrtis].

In Gita 18.46, the performance of one's own duty is considered as worship of God. The word used here is Svakarma and not Svadharma. The performance of secular duties can also therefore be taken as worship of God, in accordance with the modern interpretation of the word 'Karma'.

Pratibimba - vada and Avaccheda - vada

GSB - 15.7 - Yatha jalasuryakah - Both these Vadas are used here.

GSB - 15.12 - Yasya ca padasya - Avacchedavada is applied here.

See also Br.up. 1.4.7 - Bhashya - Pratibimbavada.

Vedas - the sphere of their validity

GSB - 18.66 - Pratyakshadi - pramanyasya - The Vedas have authority only in matters which cannot be known through the other Pramanas such as direct perception.

Na hi sruti satamapi - Even a hundred Vedic texts cannot become valid if they assert that fire is cold or non - luminous. If there is any such assertion in the Vedas, it should be taken that the intended meaning is different.

Vedic Rituals - their ultimate purpose

GSB - 18.66 - Naca karmavidhisruteh - The Vedic rituals are intended to turn the mind away from purely worldly activities They help to purify the mind and turn it towards the indwelling Self. [They are not an end in themselves, but only the means to the ultimate goal of human life, which is Self - realisation and freedom from bondage].

Yogah/Yogi

GSB - 2.11 - Etasyah buddheh - yogah, Yogavishaya - yoginah - Yoga is that state prior to the dawn of the conviction that the Self is not a doer. This is characterized by the performance of action as a means to liberation, such performance being accompanied by discrimination between virtuous and non - virtuous deeds. It is based on the understanding that the Self, though distinct from the body, is the doer and the enjoyer. [The ordinary man does not see any distinction between the body and the Self. Actions performed by such a person cannot be considered as Yoga within the meaning of the word as used in the Gita. The word 'Yoga' is used in the sense of 'the means to liberation'. It is only when a person begins to look upon his actions as a means to ultimate liberation that his actions become fit to be described as Yoga'. This is why it has been specifically stated here that the Self should be understood to be different from the body]. Those who perform action with this knowledge are called 'Yogins'.

GSB - 2.39 - Yogetu - buddhim srnu - Now listen to the teaching concerning Yoga, which is the means of attaining the wisdom concerning Sankhya. This Yoga, which constitutes the worship of Isvara, consists in practicing samadhior in performing actions without attachment, remaining unaffected by all pairs of opposites [such as heat and cold, success and failure and so on].

GSB - 2.39 - Here Sri Sankara says that the knowledge of the Self can be attained only through the grace of God.

Different meanings of the word 'Yoga' -

GSB - 3.3 - Yogi here is one who is devoted to rituals,

GSB - 4.41 - Here 'Yoga' means 'knowledge of the supreme Reality'.

GSB - 4.42 - 'Yoga' means 'performance of action as a means to the attainment of Self-knowledge'.

GSB - 5.5 - Jnanapraptyupayatvena - yoginah - Yogis are those who perform action as a means to the attainment of Self-knowledge, without desire for the fruit and as an offering to God.

GSB - 5.11 - Here the word 'Yogi' is used in the sense of 'Karma yogi'.

GSB - 16.1 - Avagatanam - yogah - Yoga here means making the knowledge acquired from the scriptures and the teacher a matter of personal experience through concentration of the mind by withdrawing the sense organs from external objects.

Yogakshemah

GSB - 2.45 - Anupattasya upadanamyogah. Upattasya rakshanam kshemah - The acquisition of what one does not possess is called Yoga. The protection of what has been acquired is called Kshema.

Yogakshema - pradhanasya - dushkarah - - - For a person whose sole or main concern is about Yoga and Kshema in the above sense practice of the means to liberation is impossible.

But if one surrenders oneself to the Lord, He will take care of one's Yoga and Kshema.
- See Gita - 9.22.

Yogabhrashtah

GSB - 6.44 - Nakrtam cet - If he had not committed any unrighteous act, the effect of which is more powerful than the effect of the Yoga he has practiced, then he is carried forward by the latter effect. In the contrary case the effect of the unrighteous act, which is more powerful, prevails. But when, in course of time, the effect of the unrighteous action has got exhausted, the tendency born of Yoga begins to take effect by itself. The idea is that the good effects of the practice of Yoga are never destroyed, though they may be suppressed for some time.
According to Madhusudana Sarasvati's commentary on the Gita - 18.12, the Yogabhrashta must have been a Vividisha Sannyasi in his previous birth.

Three Levels of Reality

Advaita Vedanta recognizes three levels of reality. A person, seeing a rope in dim light, mistakes it for a snake. He is as much frightened as he would have been if there had been a real snake there. The snake is said to have 'pratibhasika' reality. In Vedanta the illusory snake is described as a superimposition [Adhyasa] on the rope. The snake is not real, because, it is found on examination with a light, that it never existed there. At the same time, it was not absolutely unreal like the horn of a hare because it was experienced. Similarly, this world is not unreal, because it is actually experienced by us. But on the dawn of Self-knowledge it is known to have no

existence apart from Brahman. The world is therefore said to be superimposed on Brahman. The world is said to have 'vyavaharika' reality, because it is real until the attainment of Self - realisation. Brahman alone has absolute or 'paramarthika' reality, because It is absolutely changeless and is never sublated.

Advaita Vedanta in Srimad Bhagavatam

By S. N. Sastri

It is well known that Srimad Bhagavatam, considered to be the greatest among the eighteen Puranas attributed to Sage Veda Vyasa, is devoted to the exposition of the path of Bhakti and that the various episodes described therein are intended to strengthen devotion in the minds of people. It is however not so well known that it also expounds the path of Jnana or knowledge by conveying the essence of the Upanishads in a very lucid and attractive manner. Such expositions of the path of Jnana are found in almost every chapter. Here a few verses from the tenth Skandha are taken and explained to illustrate this.

The tenth Skandha of Srimad Bhagavatam describes Krishna Avatara in detail. In chapter 14 of this Skandha it is said that once Brahma, the Creator, wanted to know the extent of Krishna's power. He therefore took away the cowherd boys and calves who were with Krishna in the forest and hid them. Krishna, who knew what Brahma had done, took the form of all the cowherd boys and calves as well as of all the things which the boys carried such as slings, staff etc. In the evening Krishna, in the form of all these, went back to Gokula. There each boy went to his own house and each calf went to its mother. The mothers and fathers of the boys did not see any difference between their own sons and these boys. The cows also accepted the calves as their own. The next morning Krishna and all these boys went to the forest along with the calves as usual and returned in the evening. This went on for a year. Then Brahma came to the forest to find out what was happening. He was astonished to see all the boys and calves there, though the boys and calves he had taken away were still in the place where he had hidden them. As he was looking on in utter amazement, he saw each one of the boys assuming the form of the Lord Himself, with four arms bearing a conch, discus, mace and lotus, adorned with a diadem and a necklace of pearls and clad in yellow silk. Then all of them became cowherd boys again and Krishna was standing in their midst, holding a morsel of cooked rice in his hand, exactly as he was at the instant when Brahma took away the calves and the boys. Realising that Krishna was the Supreme Brahman Himself, Brahma prostrated before him in great humility and began to extol him with hymns. The gist of the Upanishads is brought out in these hymns. Some of these verses are taken and explained below.

Bh. X.14.22:

"The universe appears by Maya in you, the Infinite, the eternal Bliss-consciousness. Though the universe is only like things seen in a dream (and

so unreal), and is devoid of consciousness and ever full of misery, it appears as real (and also conscious and blissful)".

In Vedanta Reality is defined as that which does not undergo any change whatsoever in all the three periods of time, i.e., past, present and future. Brahman is the only Reality. Because of Maya, Brahman appears to us as the universe of names and forms. Maya conceals Brahman and projects the universe. Just as everything seen in dream ceases to exist as soon as the dreamer wakes up, the universe ceases to be real when Brahman is realized. The universe appears to be real only as long as we are under the spell of Maya (or Avidya or ignorance). The fundamental principles of Advaita Vedanta are brought out in this verse, namely, that the universe has no absolute reality, it is only a superimposition on Brahman and appears to be real only because of our ignorance of the substratum, Brahman, just as a rope appears as a snake in dim light when its real nature is not known.

Bh. X.14.23:

You (Krishna, the supreme Brahman), are the non-dual Self, the primordial Person, the Reality, self-luminous, infinite, the first Cause, eternal, imperishable, ever Bliss itself, taintless, perfect without a second, devoid of all adjuncts (Nirguna) and immortal.

This is exactly the description of the supreme Brahman as contained in the Upanishads. The expression "devoid of all adjuncts" indicates Nirguna Brahman or Brahman without attributes. The concept of Nirguna Brahman is peculiar to Advaita Vedanta.

Bh.X.14.25 to 28:

Those who do not know the Atman as their own Self, look upon the entire phenomenal universe as real because of ignorance, but the universe disappears when Self-knowledge dawns, just as a snake seen on a rope disappears when the rope is known. Bondage and liberation, which are both products of ignorance, have no existence apart from the Atman whose nature is Truth and Consciousness. For, rightly considered, there can be neither ignorance nor bondage, and neither knowledge nor freedom from bondage for the supreme Self that is eternal and absolute Consciousness, any more than there can be night and day for the sun. Taking the Atman for something else, and something else for the Atman, the Atman is sought for outside oneself; how marvelous is the folly of the ignorant! Men of discrimination seek the Infinite within the body itself, negating the unreal; without negating the unreal snake first, how can one know the rope, though it is very close?

There are many such instances in Srimad Bhagavatam where Advaita Vedanta is expounded.

Episodes in Srimad-Bhagavatam

A Vedantic Interpretation
By S. N. Sastri

Contents

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of human life is Moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Liberation is nothing but the realization of one's real nature. Srimad Bhagavatam defines Moksha succinctly as "the establishment of the individual in his essence as the Self freed from all wrong identifications" (Bh.II.10.6). Every individual identifies himself with the physical body, the sense organs and the mind. When a person describes himself as stout or lean or fair-complexioned or dark, he is looking upon himself as the physical body to which these characteristics belong. When he says 'I see', 'I hear', 'I smell' and so on, he is identifying himself with the organs of sense which perform these functions. When he says 'I am happy' or 'I am unhappy', he is identifying himself with his mind. The Upanishads declare that all these identifications are wrong and that the human being is in reality not the body or the sense-organs or the mind, but something beyond all these, known as the Atman or Self, which is eternal, changeless and not affected by anything that happens to the body-mind complex. This wrong identification is due to our ignorance of our real nature. This ignorance is what is called avidya or nescience. When this ignorance is eradicated, the person remains established in his essence as the Self or Brahman-Atman. The Upanishads lay down the means by which this wrong identification can be brought to an end and the goal of Moksha attained.

Contrary to popular conception, the objectives of the Upanishads and the Puranas are not different, but they are essentially the same, namely, to expound the means of attaining liberation. This is made very clear in Srimad-Bhagavatam, Skandha12, ch.13, verse18, which says: "Srimad-Bhagavatam,

the flawless Purana, dear to the devotees of Lord Vishnu, extols the One Pure Supreme Consciousness, which is the goal of the Paramahamsas. It describes Naishkarmya (the state of being firmly established in the realization that one is the actionless Brahman-Atman), along with spiritual knowledge, detachment and devotion. The man who hears it read or reads it himself with devotion and meditates (on its teachings) attains liberation".

Passages bringing out the gist of the Upanishads are found in almost every chapter in this Purana and particularly in the hymns of praise (stutis) addressed by various devotees to the Lord. Apart from such direct teaching of Vedanta, many of the episodes lend themselves to interpretation as allegorical stories which expound Vedanta. Srimad-Bhagavatam itself shows the way in this direction through the allegorical interpretation given by sage Narada to a story narrated by him to king Prachinabarhis (Sk.IV, ch 25 to 29). This Purana can thus be studied and appreciated at two different levels - one, as describing the glorious deeds of the Lord by which He protects the virtuous and establishes Dharma on this earth, and two, as expounding Vedanta through allegory. An attempt has been made in the following chapters to give an allegorical interpretation of a number of episodes.

2. Visit of Sanaka and other sages to Vaikuntha
(Bhagavata, Sk.III, ch.15)

The four sages, Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumara, who are known as the mind-born sons (Manasa-putras) of Brahma, the Creator, set out for Vaikuntha to do obeisance to Lord Mahavishnu (III. 15.13). On the way they passed through a divine orchard named 'Naissreyasa' which was 'Kaivalya incarnate', as it were, which was resplendent with trees that yield all that is desired and are laden with flowers and fruits in all seasons (III.15.16):

The abode of the Lord was surrounded by seven ramparts which had to be crossed before one could reach the presence of the Lord. The four sages crossed the first six ramparts without any obstruction and without being attracted in the least by the beautiful scenery all around, by the delightful singing of divine birds, by the fragrance of the divine flowers and by the delicious fruits hanging on the trees, their minds fixed on their goal, namely, seeing the Lord (III.15. 27).

At the entrance to the seventh rampart, these sages, who looked like boys of five and wore no clothes, were rudely stopped by the two gate-keepers named Jaya and Vijaya and were not allowed to proceed further (verse 30). Annoyed at being thus stopped, they pronounced a curse that since Jaya and Vijaya still entertained the sense of difference and were therefore unfit to remain in Vaikuntha, they would be born as Asuras on the earth (verse 34). That very moment the Lord, who knew what had happened, Himself came to

the spot where the sages were standing (verse 37). The sages, in ecstasy, worshipped the Lord, singing His praises (verse 45). As cursed by the sages, Jaya and Vijaya took three successive births as Asuras, first as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu, next as Ravana and Kumbhakarna and finally as Sisupala and Dantavaktra and ultimately attained salvation by the path of confrontation.

In this episode, the following features are of great significance for the spiritual seeker:--
(1) the orchard on the way is named 'Naissreyasa',
(2) seven ramparts have to be crossed before one can reach the presence of the Lord,
(3) the sages crossed the first six ramparts without their mind being distracted by the beautiful sights, sounds and smells on the way, with total concentration on their goal,
(4) at the entrance to the seventh rampart they were obstructed by Jaya and Vijaya and
(5) as soon as the sages pushed Jaya and Vijaya away with a curse, the Lord Himself appeared before them, without their having to go further.

The word 'Naissreyasa' means 'liberation' or 'the total cessation of transmigratory existence'. It is significant that this is the name of the divine orchard through which the sages had to pass. This orchard is further described as 'Kaivalya incarnate', which again means 'liberation'. It is therefore quite logical to conclude that, allegorically, the journey of the sages to Vaikuntha stands for the progress of the spiritual aspirant towards Self-realization. The seven ramparts to be crossed represent the five organs of perception, the mind and the intellect; crossing these ramparts means achieving complete control over the five sense-organs and the mind and ultimately transcending the intellect also. This is indicated by saying that the sages were not at all distracted from their aim by the delightful things on the way. The idea is that, in the same way, the seeker after liberation should not allow himself to be attracted by sense-objects, but should concentrate his mind on the Self alone.
The obstruction caused by Jaya and Vijaya at the last rampart represents the last traces of raga (attachment) and dvesha (aversion) which, as the Bhagavad-gita says, are the enemies of the spiritual aspirant. The Gita compares them to two highway robbers who will rob us of our spiritual wealth and warns us to be careful not to fall into their clutches (Gita 3.34).

Just as the sages pushed away Jaya and Vijaya from their path, the aspirant should push out even the last traces of attachment and aversion from his mind and make his mind pure.

It is significant that as soon as the sages pushed away Jaya and Vijaya by a curse, the Lord appeared before them. This indicates that, once the aspirant has become completely free from attachment and aversion, Self-realization will dawn immediately.

Thus, through this episode, the path to Self-realization is brought out, step by step. Control the senses and the mind, concentrate the mind on the Self, do not be attracted by worldly pleasures and root out attachment and aversion. This is the path to Self-realization.

The Kathopanishad says (2.1.1) that the nature of the sense-organs is to proceed outward, to enjoy sense-objects, such as sound, etc.

They are therefore not capable of knowing the indwelling Self. But a rare 'Dhira', desiring immortality, withdraws his sense-organs from external objects and sees the indwelling Self. Kalidasa defines 'Dhira' as one whose mind is not distracted even in the presence of the most desirable objects (Kumarasambhava, I.59).

The four sages are the best examples of such a Dhira. This episode thus illustrates the teaching contained in the Kathopanishad mantra referred to above.

3. Varaha Incarnation

The incarnation of the Lord as Varaha (the Divine Boar) and the slaying of the demon Hiranyaksha are described in chapters 13, 17, 18 and 19 of Skandha III of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Svayambhuva Manu, the first of the fourteen Manus, was engaged in the task of creation at the command of his father, Brahma. He suddenly noticed that the earth, the dwelling place for all creatures, had been submerged in the waters. Manu approached Brahma and prayed to him to lift the earth out of the waters. Knowing that he was helpless and that only the Supreme Lord, Narayana, could come to his help, Brahma meditated on the Lord. While he was thus meditating, a tiny boar cub of the size of a thumb emerged from his nostril. The boar immediately grew to the size of an elephant and then to the size of a mountain, all in a trice. Brahma was very much amazed and guessed that the boar could be none other than Narayana Himself. The sages in the jana, tapa and satya lokas began to sing hymns extolling the Lord. The Lord in the form of the huge boar suddenly plunged into the waters. Lifting up with His tusk the earth that had been submerged in the waters by the Asura Hiranyaksha, the Lord placed the earth on the surface of the water. He then turned towards the Asura who was rushing towards Him in uncontrollable anger. A fierce fight ensued, during which the Asura employed

many magical tricks, all of which proved to be of no avail against the Lord, who is Himself the wielder of Maya. The Lord despatched His beloved weapon, the Discus, known as Sudarsana and destroyed the phantoms conjured up by the Asura with his magical powers. The Lord then dealt the Asura a severe blow, without any effort, as if it was mere play. The Asura dropped dead. The earth was thus saved by the Lord from the clutches of the Asura.

Now let us try to find out the allegorical meaning of this story. The earth is proverbially considered to be synonymous with forbearance. In the Valmiki Ramayana, Sri Rama is described by sage Narada as 'equal to the earth in forbearance' (kshamayaa prithiveesamah- Bala Kanda, Ch.1, verse18). Forbearance is one of the hallmarks of Sattvaguna. The earth therefore stands for Sattvaguna in this episode.

The Lord says in the Bhagavadgita that everything in this universe is made up of the three gunas-- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva stands for knowledge, calmness, serenity and similar virtues. Rajas stands for ego-centred activity and Tamas for sleep, indolence and similar qualities. In the majority of human beings Rajas predominates, making their minds ever go outward in search of happiness. Spiritual evolution requires the withdrawal of the mind from external objects and directing it towards the Self (Atma) within, which is Bliss itself and therefore the source of all happiness. This can be achieved only by reducing the Rajoguna in the mind and increasing the Sattvaguna correspondingly. Karmayoga and devotional practices help to achieve this. It is said by the Lord in the Bhagavadgita that Sattva increases when Rajas and Tamas are subdued. (Ch.14, verse10). This process of conquering our Rajasic tendencies and bringing up the Sattvaguna which is lying suppressed within is what is allegorically brought out by this story.

Hiranyaksha, being an Asura possessing all the Asuric qualities spoken of in Chapter 16 of the Gita, represents Rajoguna. When Rajoguna predominates, Sattvaguna is suppressed. This suppression of Sattvaguna, represented here by the earth, by Rajoguna, represented by Hiranyaksha is the significance of Hiranyaksha keeping the earth immersed in water. Brahma sought the help of the Lord to save the earth from the Asura. So also, we have to pray for divine help to conquer our Rajoguna and bring up the suppressed Sattvaguna. When Brahma meditated on the Lord, the boar came out of his nostril, that is to say, the power which crushed the Asura came from within himself. This is very significant. This indicates that when we resort to meditation on the Lord, the strength to conquer our Rajoguna will come from within ourselves and not from outside. This strength, which, like the boar, is small initially, grows with our devotion and meditation, as the boar did. Ultimately we acquire sufficient spiritual strength within ourselves to conquer our Rajasic tendencies and make our mind predominantly Sattvic. This is symbolized by the slaying of

Hiranyaksha and the rescue of the earth.

Thus the import of this story, if looked at allegorically, is that by devotion to God and meditation the seeker can generate within himself the power to get rid of the Rajasic (and Tamasic) tendencies which stand in the way of spiritual evolution and make his mind predominantly Sattvic. Such a mind alone can be completely withdrawn from external objects and concentrated on the Self. This is the way to Self-realization.

4. Vamana Incarnation

The incarnation of the Lord as Vamana forms the subject-matter of Chapters 15 to 23 of the eighth Skandha of Srimad Bhagavatam.

The Devas and the Asuras jointly churned the Milk Ocean for amrita (the nectar that confers freedom from death). When the Lord emerged from the ocean in the form of Dhanvantari carrying a pot containing amrita, the Asuras snatched the pot. The Lord then appeared in the form of Mohini and distributed all the amrita to the Devas. The Asuras who were deprived of the nectar began to fight against the Devas. In the fight Bali, one of the Asuras, was killed by Indra, the king of the Devas. Bali was later brought back to life by Sukracharya, the Guru of the Asuras. Under the guidance of Sukracharya Bali performed a Visvajit sacrifice and acquired extraordinary powers. He then attacked the capital of Indra in heaven. Brihaspati, the Guru of the Devas, told Indra that Bali was very strong at that time and that it would be futile for the Devas to resist his attack. He advised the Devas to go into hiding and bide their time for a counter-attack. Accordingly the Devas left heaven and Bali occupied it as the ruler of all the three worlds.

Sorely grieved at the plight of her sons, Aditi, the mother of the Devas, requested her husband, the great sage Kasyapa, to devise some means by which the Devas could get back their kingdom and their previous glory. The sage advised her to worship Lord Vishnu by observing a vow known as 'payovrata'. This consists of worship for a period of twelve days during the bright fortnight of the month of phalguna, observing strictly certain disciplines and living on milk alone. Aditi observed the vow, following all the instructions strictly. At the conclusion of the vow the Lord appeared before her and told her that He would soon be born as her son. He asked her to keep the fact of His having appeared before her a total secret.

The Lord was then born as Aditi's son on Sravana Dvadasi, the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada. This day is celebrated even now as Vijaya Dvadasi. At birth the child was in the resplendent form of Vishnu, clad in yellow silks, with four arms bearing the conch, the mace, the lotus and the discus, but he changed immediately into the form of a dwarfish

human child. The delighted sages present, including Kasyapa, conducted the appropriate sacraments and invested him with the sacred thread. The sacred Gayatri mantra was imparted by the sun-god, Savita himself. Brihaspati gave him the sacred thread and Kasyapa the grass girdle. Goddess Earth gave him the skin of the black antelope, the moon-god gave him his staff; his mother gave him a cod-piece and a loin-cloth, while the goddess of the sky gave an umbrella. Brahma gave him a water pot and the seven sages kusa grass, while Goddess Sarasvati gave him a garland of beads. The sovereign of the Yakshas gave him the begging bowl, and Goddess Uma Herself, the Mother of the universe, gave him his first alms. Thus honoured, Vamana outshone by his Brahmic splendour everyone in that assembly of Brahmarshis. Then, hearing that Bali was performing horse sacrifices, Vamana set out for the Yagasala. Dazzled by the splendour of Vamana even when he was at a distance, Bali and the priests who were conducting the sacrifices wondered whether it was the sun-god himself, or god Agni or the sage Sanatkumara who was coming towards them. They received Vamana with great respect. Bali washed Vamana's feet and sprinkled the water purified by the touch of those feet on his own head. He then asked Vamana what gift he wanted, saying in all arrogance that he could give anything Vamana wanted-- food, house, land or a bride or anything else, or all of them. Vamana replied that all that he wanted was just a small strip of land, three paces in length as measured by his own feet. On hearing this Bali laughed and said, "O boy! You are a simpleton. Having approached me, the undisputed ruler of all the three worlds, and so capable of gifting a whole continent, you are asking for such a petty gift. My generosity is such that anyone who has obtained a favour from me will not thereafter find it necessary to go to any one else for anything". Vamana replied that he would be contented with just what he had asked for, because a person who is not contented with three paces of land would not be satisfied even if he gets an entire continent. Bali then said, "Let it be as you wish", and was about to give the gift asked for.

Bali's Guru Sukracharya then recognised Vamana as Lord Vishnu Himself and asked Bali not to give the gift, because the intention of Vamana was to take away everything belonging to Bali and give it to Indra. Bali told Sukracharya, "Having made a promise, I will not go back on it, whatever may be the consequences. I am not afraid so much of the tortures of hell, poverty, loss of position or even death as I am of breaking my pledged word. If indeed Lord Vishnu Himself has come to beg of me, there can be no greater blessing for me. I will therefore honour my word and give the gift". Annoyed that Bali did not heed his advice, Sukracharya cursed him, saying, "You have grown so arrogant as to reject my advice. A highly conceited fool that you are, you will soon fall from you high position".

Undaunted by the curse, Bali insisted on honouring his word and proceeded to give the gift of three paces of land to Vamana. Vamana immediately grew in size to such an extent that with the first stride he covered the earth, the sky and the four quarters. With his second stride he covered heaven and all the worlds up to Satyaloka, the world of Brahma. He then asked Bali to show him the place for his third stride. Without flinching in the least, Bali said. "Pray place your third step on my head". The Lord did so and sent Bali to one of the nether regions named Sutala, as the ruler thereof, promising that He Himself would permanently stand guard there. The Lord further said that Bali would become Indra in the next Manvantara and would thereafter go to the Lord's own realm, Vaikuntha.

We see from this story that Bali possessed many great virtues. He had great respect for holy men, which is evident from the way he received and honoured the Brahmachari boy, Vamana (whom he did not know to be Lord Vishnu). He was extremely generous. Above all, he kept his word and refused to go back on it even after his Guru pronounced a terrible curse on him. Why was such a person punished by the Lord? This is the question that comes up in everyone's mind. This very question was put by Brahma to Lord Vishnu. Brahma asked, "This Asura gifted away the entire earth and all the other worlds he had won by good works to Thee; and even his body has been offered without the slightest hesitation. A man who is free from guile obtains the highest of goals by merely offering arghya at Thy feet and worshipping them with just a blade of grass. That being so, how can he who gave away the three worlds with a serene mind be subjected to such a punishment?" (Bh.VIII. 22.23).

To this the Lord replied: "O Brahma! I take away the wealth of those on whom I shower My grace. For, it is because of being intoxicated with wealth that a person becomes arrogant and despises the whole world and even Me" (Bh.VIII.22.24). He further adds, "If, in spite of high birth, great deeds, youth, beauty, learning, power, affluence and the like, a person remains free from pride, it is due only to My grace" (Bh.VIII.22.26).

Thus the great defect in Bali's character was the arrogance of wealth and power. This overshadowed all his innumerable virtues. The lesson we learn from this episode is that as long as there is arrogance spiritual progress is not possible, even though the person may possess many virtues. When the Lord says that he takes away the wealth of the person he wishes to bless, what is meant is that the conceit that one is affluent and powerful, which is the cause of arrogance, is removed by the Lord, so that spiritual progress becomes possible. By surrendering all his possessions to the Lord Bali became free from the notion of 'mine-ness' (mamakara). Then, by asking the Lord to place His feet on his own head, he gave up his ego or 'I-ness' (ahamkara). With these two removed, he became fit for the Lord's grace. Thus an attitude of

detachment towards all possessions and total surrender to the Lord are the virtues to be cultivated by every spiritual aspirant.

In fact, the Lord has not punished Bali, but has really blessed him, as may be seen from the following words of the Lord Himself:--"You have been granted by Me a place unattainable even by the gods. In the Meru-Savarni Manvantara you will be the Indra with my full support. Till then you will live in Sutala; those who live there shall be vouchsafed My gracious glance and will ever be unaffected by physical and mental ailments. You will always have My presence there. Constantly witnessing My greatness there, you will become absolutely free from even the slightest trace of asuric tendencies (Bh.VIII.22. 31 to 36).

Bali (or Mahabali) is believed to visit his land Kerala every year on Onam day; the day is therefore celebrated as a great festival.

5. Liberation of Gajendra

The episode known as liberation of the lordly elephant Gajendra is narrated in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the eighth skandha of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

There was a Pandya king by name Indradyumna who was a great devotee of the Lord. Towards the end of his life he had retired to a hermitage in a forest and used to spend all his time in worship of the Lord. One day he was performing worship as usual and observing a vow of silence. Sage Agastya then happened to come there along with his disciples. Being engrossed in worship, the King did not notice the presence of the sage and so failed to offer him the customary honours. The sage took offence at this apparent indifference and pronounced the following curse--"This king has insulted me. Let him therefore be steeped in blinding ignorance. Since he is haughty like an elephant, let him be born as an elephant". Before proceeding further with the story it would be worthwhile to examine what is the underlying idea behind such curses by great sages who are expected to have conquered anger and to remain unaffected by either praise or insult. Such curses are really blessings. In the present instance, though the king was a sincere devotee of the Lord, he had not yet realized the truth that the same God or Self dwells in all beings. Liberation is possible only with such a realization. In the normal course he would probably have to go through many more births before attaining this state. The curse inflicted on him and the consequent suffering he undergoes as an elephant make him surrender totally to the Lord and become liberated immediately. Thus the curse was intended to hasten his liberation and was really a blessing.

One point which puzzles us here is -- why does the sage curse the king whose failure to recognize him is due only to his being absorbed in the highly

laudable object of worship of the Lord? There is a parallel to this in the Ramayanamahatmya in the Skanda Purana. There was a very righteous person named Somadatta who was a disciple of the sage Gautama. One day, when Somadatta was engaged in the worship of Lord Siva, sage Gautama happened to come there. Somadatta did not notice his presence. The sage did not however find fault with him, considering that he was absorbed in worship, and went away. But Lord Siva became angry at this insult to the Guru and cursed that he would become a Rakshasa. On Somatta's pleading for forgiveness the Lord said that he would be relieved of the effect of the curse if he heard the entire Ramayana with devotion over a period of nine days. The main object of this episode is to bring out the greatness of Ramayana, but incidentally it also points out that even inadvertent indifference to the Guru is a transgression.

As a result of the curse, king Indradyumna was born as a lordly elephant. The elephant used to roam about in the forest accompanied by a herd of female elephants. One day he entered a lake to bathe and drink water. Suddenly a very strong crocodile seized him by the leg and tried to drag him into the water. The elephant tried his best to extricate himself from the hold of the crocodile, but all his efforts proved to be in vain. The female elephants tried to pull him out, but finding that the crocodile was too strong and that their efforts would only result in themselves also being dragged into the water, they left him to his fate and went away.

After a long struggle the elephant realized that he could not save himself from the jaws of the crocodile by his own efforts. The suffering which he underwent brought back to him the memory of the devotion he had practised and the knowledge he had acquired in his previous birth as King Indradyumna. He then surrendered himself totally to the Lord, chanting hymns of praise addressed to the supreme unconditioned Brahman. Since the hymns were addressed to the supreme formless Brahman, Brahma and the other gods did not go to his help, because they egoistically identified themselves with their own forms. The supreme Lord, who is the soul of the whole universe, appeared immediately and rescued him by severing the jaw of the crocodile with his discus. The crocodile was none other than a Gandharva by name Hoohoo, who was now freed from the curse of sage Devala and regained his original marvellous form.

The story ends thus - "Freed forever from the bondage of ignorance through the touch of the Lord, the leader of the elephants attained a form similar to the Lord's; he was clad in yellow silks and endowed with four arms (Saroopya)" - (Bh. VIII.4.6.)

Looking at this episode allegorically, it can be said that the elephant stands for the 'ego' which is the result of the bondage of ignorance. This ignorance

and its result, the ego, disappear by the grace of the Lord and the individual realizes his identity with the supreme Self, here described as attaining the same form as the Lord. The crocodile represents this transmigratory existence, or samsaara, which is often compared to a crocodile in Vedantic texts such as Vivekachudamani. The individual, because of his ego, i.e. identification with his body due to ignorance of his real nature, is caught in the jaws of the crocodile, the samsaara. He can get release from this only by the Lord's grace. Neither his own efforts nor the help of others will save him from his false identification.

The elephant's prayer is addressed to the Nirguna Brahman and contains the quintessence of all the Upanishads. What is the idea in putting all this wisdom in the mouth of an animal? The object is to bring out an important teaching of the Upanishads and the Gita. The elephant was, in his previous life as King Indradyumna, a great devotee and had mastered the Upanishads. The knowledge acquired in that life came back to him in his next life as an elephant, at the proper time. The Bhagavadgita says in verse 43 of chapter 6 that the knowledge acquired in the previous body continues in the next birth and enables the person to evolve further. In the Brihadaranyaka upanishad it is said that at the time of death the departing self carries with it the knowledge acquired, the fruits of actions performed (karma) and past experience (IV.iv.2).

The crocodile which caught the elephant was in its previous life a Gandharva by name Hoohoo. This Gandharva used to indulge in various pranks. Once, when the sage Devala was bathing in a river, Hoohoo went under the water and caught the sage by the leg. Since this behaviour was characteristic of a crocodile, the sage cursed him to be born as a crocodile. This story brings out the principle enunciated in the Upanishads that a person's next life will be determined by his actions and thoughts in this life. The Kathopanishad says (II.ii.7): "Some souls enter wombs for acquiring bodies and others are born as motionless beings in accordance with their actions and in conformity with their knowledge" -- i.e. the next birth will be as a human being or an animal or as a plant or tree, depending on his actions and thoughts in this life. The Gandharva Hoohoo was born as a crocodile because his action in catching hold of the feet of sage Devala was characteristic of a crocodile. Thus several teachings of the Upanishads are conveyed through this story.

6. Churning of the Ocean of Milk

The episode of the churning of the Ocean of Milk for getting the Nectar of immortality appears in chapters 5 to 11 of the eighth Skandha of Srimad Bhagavata. The story may first be narrated before going into its inner meaning.

Sage Durvasa had received a divine garland from a celestial damsel. Knowing that the wearer of this garland would be blessed with all prosperity, Durvasa went to Indra and presented the garland to him. Indra, who was then seated on his elephant, received it without caring to get down and make obeisance to the sage, and nonchalantly placed it on the head of the elephant. The elephant shook its head and, when the garland fell down, trampled on it. Sorely annoyed at this blatant display of disrespect, Durvasa left immediately after pronouncing a curse that Indra, as well as the three worlds ruled by him, would soon lose all their splendour. Taking advantage of the situation the Asuras attacked the Devas and killed many of them. Indra and the other gods rushed to Brahma seeking his help. Brahma told them that none but Lord Vishnu would be able to help them out of their predicament. Lord Vishnu, to whom all of them then went, advised them to make peace with the Asuras and seek their co-operation for churning the Ocean of Milk to get the nectar which would make them immortal.

As commanded by Lord Vishnu, the gods got the co-operation of the Asuras and set about the task of churning the ocean, using the Mandara mountain as the churning rod and the serpent Vasuki as the churning rope. While the gods and the Asuras were carrying the mountain to the ocean they became exhausted by the great effort and dropped the mountain. The Lord immediately appeared there on his mount Garuda, placed the mountain on Garuda and carried it to the ocean with ease.

When the churning was to begin, the Lord asked the Asuras to hold the tail-end of Vasuki and the Devas the head. The Asuras objected to this and wanted to be at the head-end. The Lord immediately agreed to this. This was a stratagem adopted by the Lord to make the Asuras suffer when poison would emanate from Vasuki's mouth during the churning. When the churning had gone on for a little while, the mountain sank into the ocean because of its weight. The Lord again came to their rescue by taking the form of a huge tortoise, going deep down into the ocean and lifting up the mountain on His back. The Devas and Asuras then resumed the churning while the Lord Himself kept the mountain in position by pressing it down with one hand so as to prevent it from springing up due to the force of the churning. When Vasuki began to emit poison, the Asuras who were at the head-end were affected most and the Devas at the tail-end to a lesser extent. The Lord then caused cool showers of rain to fall on the Devas, but not on the Asuras.

When nothing emerged from the ocean in spite of long churning, the Lord Himself took up the churning, holding both ends of Vasuki in His hands. The first thing to emerge after the Lord took up the churning was the deadly poison known as Haalaahala. As it spread in all directions, the terrified Devas ran to Lord Siva for refuge. Lord Siva took the poison in the hollow of His palm and put it in His mouth, but did not swallow it, lest the living beings

inside His stomach be destroyed. He kept it in His throat and thereby protected all the living beings, both within and outside Him. The poison left a black mark around His throat and that became His special adornment.

Then there emerged from the ocean, one after another, Kamadhenu, whom Lord Vishnu gave to the Rishis, the horse Uchchhaisravas, the elephant Airavata, the Kalpaka tree which grants all wishes, and divine damsels, all of whom were given to the Devas by the Lord. Then Goddess Lakshmi emerged and she chose the Lord Himself as her consort. The next to come up was the intoxicating liquor Varuni, which the Lord permitted the Asuras to take for themselves. Finally emerged Dhanvantari, another form of the Lord Himself, holding in his hands a vessel of nectar. The Asuras immediately snatched the nectar, while the Devas looked on helplessly. The Lord again came to the rescue of the Devas, taking the form of a beautiful young damsel, Mohini. The Asuras, who were intoxicated with the liquor Varuni, became infatuated with Mohini and requested her to distribute the nectar. Mohini asked the Devas and the Asuras to sit in separate rows and distributed all the nectar to the Devas, while the Asuras, who had succumbed to her charms, merely looked on. One Asura, Rahu, had disguised himself as a Deva and sat between the Sun and the Moon and he was also served nectar, but, on being pointed out by a gesture by the Sun and the Moon, the Lord cut him into two with his Discus. His trunk, which had not been touched by the nectar, fell down, but the head having gained immortality because of the contact of nectar, Brahma turned him into a planet. It is that planet which, entertaining animosity against them, swallows the Sun and the Moon, causing the eclipses.

When the Asuras realised that they had been fooled by Mohini, they attacked the Devas, but with the help of the Lord the Devas were able to vanquish them.

Now let us see what are the lessons conveyed by this story. The Devas and Asuras can be taken as representing the divine and demoniac tendencies in the human mind, which are described in chapter 16 of the Bhagavadgita. This is supported by the explanation given by Sri Sankara in his Bhashya on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1.iii.1. Sri Sankara says, "The Devas and the Asuras are the organs of speech and the rest. They become Devas when they shine under the influence of thoughts and actions as taught by the scriptures. Those very organs become Asuras when they are under the influence of their natural thoughts and actions, based only on perception and inference, and directed merely towards the attainment of worldly ends". The divine tendencies are fearlessness, purity of mind, control of the senses, straightforwardness, non-covetousness, humility, and the like. The demoniac tendencies are arrogance, anger, harshness, ignorance and the like. Both these types of tendencies are present in every normal human being. The proportion of divine and demoniac tendencies varies from person to person.

Even in the same person sometimes the divine tendencies may be dominant and sometimes the demoniac, making the person behave differently at different times. Indra here represents such a human mind. When sage Durvasa came, the demoniac tendencies were dominant in Indra and so he behaved arrogantly. His discrimination was clouded. The curse of Durvasa shows that no one, however high the position he occupies, can escape the consequences of actions performed under the influence of demoniac tendencies.

As soon as the sage uttered the curse, Indra realised the consequences and sought the grace of the Lord which alone can help man. The Lord asked him to make peace with the Asuras temporarily because they were at that time very strong and could not be defeated. This is another way of saying that it is not possible to get rid of the demoniac tendencies by fighting against them and trying to suppress them when they are strong. The divine tendencies must first be made stronger and then only can the demoniac tendencies be countered. The Devas were therefore asked to strengthen themselves by getting the nectar from the ocean.

The figure of 'churning' is one which appears in the Upanishads also. It stands for the extraction of the essence. The Svetasvataropanishad says (1.14): "Making one's own body the lower piece of wood and the pranava the upper piece of wood, and practising churning in the form of meditation, one should realise God as one would find out something hidden". (For lighting the fire for yajnas one piece of wood is placed vertically on another piece of wood placed horizontally and churning is done to produce fire. The two pieces of wood are known as Aranis). The same upanishad also says that the supreme Self can be perceived in the intellect, just as butter can be obtained from curd (1.16). So, just as butter is obtained by churning curd, one can realise the Self by churning one's own intellect.

In Sivanandalahari, verse 37, Sri Sankara says that the wise man should churn the ocean of the Vedas, using his virtuous mind as the rod and firm devotion as the rope, in order to realise God: "Just as the Devas churned the ocean of milk and obtained the moon, the wish-fulfilling tree, the cow Kamadhenu, the gem Chintamani, nectar and Goddess Lakshmi, so the wise churn the ocean of the Vedas, using their virtuous mind as the rod and firm devotion as the rope and attain you (Lord Siva), who confer the nectar of eternal bliss".

This is the significance of this episode of churning the ocean of milk.

It has been repeatedly brought out in this episode that no one can succeed in any action without the grace and help of the Lord. When the Devas and the Asuras were carrying the Mandara mountain it fell down and only the Lord

could take it to the ocean. When the mountain went down into the water, the Lord had to take the form of a huge tortoise and lift it up. It was only after the Lord Himself took up the churning that things began to emerge from the ocean.

The first thing to emerge from the ocean was the deadly poison, which was removed by Lord Siva so that it may not do any harm to living beings. The idea brought out here is that when a person progresses sufficiently in meditation, all the impurities in his mind such as desire, anger, greed, and the like, which harm his spiritual progress, are removed by the grace of God. The poison may be taken as standing for such impurities.

While asking the Devas to churn the ocean for nectar, Lord Vishnu warned them not to covet any of the things that might come up during the churning (Bh.VIII.6.25). This is similar to the warning given to the spiritual aspirant not to be tempted by the siddhis which may come to him, but to keep his mind fixed on the ultimate goal, liberation. The Kamadhenu, kalpaka tree, etc, represent the siddhis.

7. Slaying of Pralambasura

The Bhagavata Purana describes how Kamsa sent many Asuras to kill Krishna and how all of them were slain effortlessly by Krishna. One of the Asuras who met with such a fate was Pralamba. The story is narrated in chapter 18 of the tenth skandha.

One day, as usual, Krishna, Balarama and the cowherd boys took their calves to Brindavana for grazing. There they entertained themselves by playing a game in which the boys were divided into two teams, one under the leadership of Krishna and the other under that of Balarama. A boy belonging to one team would wrestle with a boy from the other team. The boy who was defeated had to carry on his shoulders the boy who won up to the foot of a particular banyan tree. Krishna allowed himself to be defeated by his dearest friend Sudama and then carried Sudama up to the tree. This action of the Lord is interpreted as indicating that He is the servant of His devotees.

An Asura named Pralamba, an emissary of Kamsa, came there in the guise of a cowherd boy, with the intention of killing Krishna and Balarama. He requested Krishna to allow him to take part in the game. Though Krishna knew who he was, he pretended ignorance and took Pralamba in his own team. Pralamba wrestled with Balarama and was defeated. He then carried Balarama on his shoulders as required by the rules of the game, but did not stop at the foot of the banyan tree to allow Balarama to get down.

When Balarama found that he was being carried far away he became suspicious and increased his weight in order to force Pralamba to put him down. Pralamba then assumed his real form as an Asura. Seeing the huge form of the Asura and finding that the Asura was carrying him far away from Krishna, Balarama became frightened. He then turned round and because of the great height of the Asura he was able to see the face of Krishna at a distance. It is said in the Vishnupurana (5.9.23) that Krishna then mentally transmitted the following message to Balarama: "O you who are the self of all! Why have you, who are the most mysterious indwelling self, assumed the attitude of an ordinary human being (and become frightened)?". On receiving this message and looking at the face of Krishna, all fear disappeared from Balarama's mind and he got the courage and strength to crush the Asura and extricate himself.

In this story Pralamba represents the evil vasanas (inherent tendencies acquired in past lives) in every human being. These vasanas make the human being engage himself in various worldly activities and carry him away from the Lord as Balarama was carried away from Krishna by Pralamba. The message which Krishna gave to Balarama is applicable not only to Balarama but to every human being. The meaning of the message is-- "You are really the Atman, but you are wrongly identifying yourself with your body-mind complex and looking upon yourself as a limited being. It is this wrong identification that makes you a slave to your vasanas and results in your being carried away hither and thither by them. Once you realise your real identity, namely that you are the indwelling self which is none other than the supreme Brahman itself, you will be able to extricate yourself from the hold of your vasanas". The destruction of Pralamba signifies the elimination of vasanas, which is the same as liberation. Sri Sankara says in Vivekachudamani that the elimination of vasanas is itself liberation and it is what is called 'jivanmukti' (verse 318). Sri Narayana Bhattatiri says in his Narayaneeyam (which is a condensed version of Srimad Bhagavatam) that when Balarama came back to Krishna after killing Pralamba, Krishna embraced Balarama and the gods showered flowers on both of them (Dasaka 57, verse 10). Krishna's embrace represents union with the Lord or the realisation of the identity of the individual self and Brahman. Even the gods worship such a human being because by realising his real identity as Brahman he has become the self of the gods too.

8. Rescue of cows and cowherds from forest fire

In chapter 19 of the tenth Skandha of Srimad Bhagavatam is described how Lord Krishna rescued a group of cowherd boys and their cows from a raging forest fire.

One day, as usual, Krishna and Balarama, along with a large number of cowherd boys, led their cows to the forest for grazing. While the boys were engrossed in play, the cows went forward in search of tender grass. As they moved on, they advanced beyond the limits of Vrindavana which was the abode of Krishna and entered a forest called 'Aishikam'. This forest was full of a particular variety of grass which had the tendency to catch fire easily. The forest was unbearably hot and the cows became totally exhausted because of hunger and thirst. The tender grass which they hoped to find was nowhere to be seen.

The cowherd boys, who were absorbed in play, did not notice for a long time that the cows had gone far away from them. When they did not find the cows at the place where they had left them, they became worried and went in search of them and found them in the Aishika forest. When they were about to bring the cows back, a forest fire broke out. The boys found themselves and their cows surrounded by the fire. In desperation they cried out to Krishna for help. Krishna came and asked them not to be afraid but to close their eyes for a few moments. They did so, and when they opened their eyes again they found themselves back in Vrindavana with no trace whatsoever of the fire. They were thus saved by Krishna from the fire.

The story looks very simple, but every statement in it has profound philosophical significance. The cows, which moved away from Krishna in search of tender grass represent human beings who forget the Lord and seek happiness in the world outside. As happened to the cows, the search for happiness in the world proves futile and results only in disappointment and suffering. The heat of the Aishika forest and the forest fire represent the sufferings of man in this transmigratory existence. Krishna asked the boys and the cows to close their eyes for a while and immediately all their sufferings vanished. 'Closing the eyes' stands for withdrawal of all the organs of sense from their objects. A very similar expression is used in the Kathopanishad, II.i.1 which says: "The Lord made the senses outgoing. Therefore one can see only external objects and not the inner Self. A rare discriminating individual, desiring immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the indwelling Self". In this mantra the term 'eyes' stands for all the organs of sense. The meaning of this mantra is: Our sense-organs have been endowed by God with the power to experience only sense-objects in the external world. They are not capable of knowing the indwelling Self. A rare person, who has acquired total purity of mind, withdraws all his sense-organs from their objects and concentrates his mind on the Self. He then realises the self and becomes free from all the sufferings of this world. The boys and the cows found that the fire which was tormenting them had disappeared without a trace when they closed their eyes for a moment. This episode thus brings out allegorically the meaning of the mantra of the Kathopanishad quoted above.

9. Slaying of Narakasura

The slaying of Narakasura is described in chapter 59 of Skandha X of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Narakasura, described as a son of Bhumidevi, was a very wicked Asura who terrorised the whole earth. He conquered many kings and carried away 16,100 young women from their families and kept them in captivity. On coming to know of this, Krishna marched against him. Krishna was first opposed by Mura, an Asura with five faces, who was an associate of Narakasura. After killing Mura, Krishna killed Narakasura also and released all the women. He then married all of them.

A careful study will show that the entire teachings of Vedanta are conveyed through this simple story. The first significant fact is the description of Narakasura as the son of Bhumi, the Earth. Bhumi or earth is one of the five elements, the other four being water, fire, air and space. In Vedanta there is a figure of speech called 'upalakshana' by which, when one item of a group is specifically mentioned, all the other items of the group are also to be taken as implied. Thus the mention of 'earth' here is to be taken as implying all the five elements. This conclusion is further supported by the following statements in the Bhashya of Sri Sankara on Brahmasutra. 3.1.2:--"Water consists of three components, according to the Upanishadic text about the elements becoming tripartite (Ch. Up. VI. iii). So when water is admitted as the constituent, the other two elements must also be admitted. Moreover, the body is the product of the three elements since all three, fire, water and earth, are seen to be its constituents". Only three elements are mentioned here because the discussion is about a statement in the Chandogya Upanishad which mentions only the triplication of these three elements. When quintuplication of the five elements is considered, it follows that all the five elements should be considered as represented by the term 'earth'.

Narakasura is said to be the son of the earth, which means allegorically that he is the product of the five elements. Vedanta says that the body (both physical and subtle) is made up of, or is the product of, the five elements. That is to say, Narakasura stands for the body.

All living beings are kept in bondage by the body. This is what is implied by the statement that Narakasura had kept the women in captivity. The women are the jivas who are imprisoned in the body. The name 'Narakasura' is also significant. Being a slave to the body is itself Naraka or hell. Liberation is freedom from the bondage or limitation of the body. By slaying Narakasura the Lord, in His infinite compassion for His devotees, liberated them from bondage. The story also brings out the fact that God's grace is essential for getting liberation.

There is another very significant point in this story. Mura, the associate of Narakasura, is said to have five faces. These five faces stand for the five organs of sense which have first to be conquered and this is what the Lord did. The name 'Mura' is itself significant. The verb 'mura' means 'envelope'. (mura samveshtane -- Panini's Dhatupatha, No. 1287). Mura therefore stands for ignorance or 'nescience' which envelopes the jiva.

On attaining liberation the jiva becomes one with Brahman. This is the real import of the statement that the Lord married all the women who were released. 'Marriage' means becoming one with the Lord.

10. Redemption of Sudarsana

The Upanishads declare that every living being will continue to be born again and again until liberation from the state of transmigration is attained by the realisation of the Self. This realisation is possible only in a human birth. In Mundakopanishad I.ii.10 it is said that even a human being who has performed meritorious deeds and earned a sojourn in heaven will not necessarily be born as a human being when he has to leave heaven on the exhaustion of the merit which took him there. He may be born as an animal or a bird or any other creature, or even as a plant, depending upon the nature of his residual karma. The Kathopanishad says (II.ii.7):--
One will be reborn from a womb (i.e. as a human being or as any other creature born from a womb) or even as a plant, according to his actions and the nature and extent of the knowledge acquired by him in the present birth.

There is a short story in chapter 34 of Skandha X of Srimad Bhagavatam which beautifully illustrates the declarations of the upanishads mentioned above. It is the story of a Vidyadhara (a semi-divine being) who became a python due to the curse of some sages and was subsequently restored to a form even more resplendent than his original one by the touch of Sri Krishna's foot. This story has a wealth of Vedantic implications.

On a certain day the cowherds of Gokula went, along with Krishna, to a place known as 'Ambikavanam'. Having bathed in the river Saraswati there, they worshipped Lord Siva and His consort Goddess Ambika. They spent that night on the bank of the river, in prayer and fasting. Suddenly a huge python appeared and began to devour Nandagopa. Hearing Nandagopa's cries the cowherds rushed to his rescue and belaboured the python with firebrands. In spite of severe beating the python did not release Nandagopa from its hold. Krishna then went there and touched the python with his foot. At once the python disappeared and there stood in its place a most resplendent Vidyadhara. When asked by Krishna who he was, he said, "I am a Vidyadhara named Sudarsana. I was endowed with great wealth and beauty and used to fly in my aerial car all over the world. Being very proud of my

exceptional beauty, I was very haughty. One day I ridiculed some sages of the Angirasa family for their ugly looks. For this sin those sages made me take this birth. The curse that those compassionate souls pronounced on me has become a blessing to me; because of it I have been blessed with the touch of the foot of the Lord of the universe, and have been cleansed of my sin". So saying, he prostrated before Krishna and ascended to heaven.

What are the lessons that this story has for us? In the first place, what are called curses in the Puranas are really blessings when they come from great sages who are full of compassion and do not even wish ill of anyone, let alone inflicting punishment. They are beyond praise and ridicule and are not in the least influenced or affected by them. Whatever they do is always for the good of others. If we analyse the curses appearing in the Puranas, we will find that they fall into two broad categories-- 1) those which, though outwardly appearing to be curses, really bless the person concerned by placing him in circumstances in which he is able to free himself of the defects in his character which stand as obstacles in the way of his spiritual advancement; (this can be compared to the action of a surgeon who uses his scalpel on the patient with the noble intention of curing him of an ailment which prevents him from leading a normal happy life) and 2) those which merely emphasize the fact that the next birth of a person will be in accordance with his thoughts and actions in this birth. Examples of the first category are the curses on Jaya and Vijaya by Sanatkumara and the other sages, the curse on King Indradyumna who became Gajendra, and the curse on Nalakubara and Manigriva by sage Narada. The curse laid on Sudarsana by the sages contains aspects which make it fit into both the categories, as will be clear from the sequel.

It will first be explained how the present curse falls under the first category. The Vidyadhara named Sudarsana had become very haughty because of his beauty. Haughtiness is the greatest of all obstacles to spiritual progress. The sages therefore temporarily deprived him of the cause of his haughtiness, namely his good looks and made him take the very repulsive form of a python. This turned out to be a blessing because he got the touch of the Lord's foot. Not only did he then get a form which was even more resplendent than his original form, but he also realized that what he had done in his haughtiness was a great sin. He thus became free from pride and so fit for spiritual progress.

The curse pronounced by the sages on Sudarsana can be brought under the second category also. Since the Vidyadhara was so proud of his beauty that he was contemptuous of others who were not so endowed, he would, on that count itself, be deprived of beauty in his next birth. This is what happened to him when he was born as a python. The curse only reiterated what would have happened even without it. The offence committed need not necessarily be against sages who have the power to curse. Such an offence even against

ordinary persons would have led to the same result of depriving him of whatever he was proud of, in his next birth. The lesson conveyed by this story is that one should never be proud of one's wealth, pedigree, good looks, learning or any other accomplishment and look down on others not so fortunate. Everyone should remember that this is not the only birth and what one has in this birth may not necessarily be his in a subsequent birth. It is the thoughts and actions in this birth that will determine what the next birth will be. If a person who is rich becomes arrogant and treats the poor with contempt or uses his wealth for doing harm to others, he will be born as a beggar in his next birth. There is no guarantee that a person who is rich in this birth will remain so in future births also. If he uses his wealth for good purposes he may have the good fortune of being rich in the next birth also. This is the real meaning of the well-known saying that no one can carry his wealth with him when he dies. The same logic applies to all natural talents and gifts that one is born with. One should be humble about them and use them for good purposes. Leave alone losing in the next birth; one may lose his or her beauty or wealth or other accomplishments even during this birth itself because of illness and various other causes. We have to remember that everything in this world is transient. If this thought is always kept in mind, one will never swerve from the right path. These are the lessons that we can draw from this story.

A former Pontiff of the Sringeri Mutt explained in a discourse the reason for persons being born blind, dumb, etc. If a person does not make use of his faculties of speech, etc., to help another person in a situation in which such help is crucial, he will be born without that faculty in his next birth. To illustrate, supposing two boys are playing in a village. One of them suddenly falls into a well. If the other boy immediately shouts for help, neighbours would rush to the place and would probably be able to rescue the boy from the well. If, instead, the other boy just walks away, fearing that he may be blamed for his friend falling into the well, with the result that the boy who fell into the well loses his life, the boy who did not use his faculty of speech at the proper time will be born dumb in his next birth. In a Puranic story such an episode would be put this way. The boy did not try to save his friend by using his voice and so he was cursed by the dead boy's parents or by some sage to become dumb.

It will be interesting to examine the various curses in the Puranas keeping the above views in mind.

A Brief on Chathuhshloki Bhaagavatham

By Major V Ramanujam

1. The Glory of Bhaagavatha Puraanam is given in the Uttara Kaanda of Padma Puraanam through dialogues between Narada & Bhakthi and Narada & Sanaka and his 3 brothers and also through the story of Mukthi or Salvation of Dhundukaari, son of Aathmadeva, by exposition of Bhaagavatham by Gokarna.

2. Bhaagavatha Puraanam has 18,000 shlokaas and is divided into 12 Skandaas (chapters/books), in the form of dialogue between King Parikshith ang sage Sukadeva, son of Rishi Veda Vyaasa .

3. Spirit or Aathma is pure and beyond the material Sheaths (Pancha koshaas) and is Pure Consciousness or Awareness, though dwelling within the human body. It is due to delusion (Maaya) that it gets the notions of "I" and "Mine" (Ahamkaara and Mamakaara). Rid of delusion and raising above the Pancha Koshaas, "I", "Mine" and Trigunaas, Man revels himself in the glory of his Self or Aathma.

4. Brahma resorts to perform Tapas: Brahma appeared from the navel (naabhi) of Sri Hari. The latter entrusted him with the work of Creation. However much Brahma meditated, he could not get the vision of Parabrahman to facilitate him to create the universe. At that time, he heard the command of the Lord to perform Tapas (penance). Obediently Brahma controlled his breath, mind and senses and practiced Tapas for a 1000 divine years (equivalent to 360,000 human years). Obviously for that period Brahma was in a state of Asambhuthi and Kaarana Brahman.

5. Brahma gets divine vision: Pleased with Brahma's Tapas, Sri Hari showed him in His own Abode, seated on a magnificent throne in full majesty and splendor, surrounded by His 25 Shaktis or Potencies (the Spirit or Purusha, Prakrithi, the Mahat tatva, the Ego, the Mind, the ten Indriyaas, the five Subtle Elements and the five Gross Elements, all in a personal form) and His 6 eternal and divine attributes called Bhagaas (Lordship, Righteousness, Renown, Prosperity, Wisdom and Dispassion).

6. On Tapas, a side remark by the Lord: Sri Hari conveys to Brahma that Tapas is His very heart and very dear to Him (Tapo mey hrudayam, saakshaath Aathmaaham tapo anagha!)He loves those who perform Tapas! Pleased with his Tapas, Sri Hari asked Brahma to seek a boon.

7. Brahma's Prayer: Brahma in all modesty prayed to Sri Hari to bless him with an insight of the Absolute (Maayaateetha, unmanifested form) and Relative (Maayaapahutha, manifested with Nama, roopa and Guna) aspects of the Lord. He sought to know how the Lord creates, sustains and re-absorbs all beings. He prayed that while creating and classifying the Jivaas as per their traits, let him not get attached to any of them or become proud of his own immunity from birth etc.

8. Sri Hari's boons: Thus beseeched by Brahma, Lord Sri Hari then told him that by His Grace, Brahma will receive the most esoteric Knowledge and Realisation of Creation. The Truth about Devotion, the Knowledge, nature and Character, manifestation, virtues and doing etc of Sri Hari. Equipped with that knowledge, Brahman then becomes Kaarya Brahma or Sambhuthi and goes ahead with Creation as Hiranyagarbha.

9. Chathuhshloki Bhaagavatham: In what has come to be known as Chathuh shloki Bhaagavatham, Lord Hari then tells Brahma about His nature etc briefly in four shlokaas (numbers 32 to 35, Discourse 9, Second Skanda of Bhaagavatham).

10. Shloka 32: Eternity: Prior to this Creation, I alone existed and that too in my Absolute State. Other than me there was nothing – Gross or Subtle or cause of both, viz., Prakruthi, the Primordial Matter. I exist even after the Creation as well in the form of this phenomenal world and I am also that which remains, after all this has disappeared (has been re-absorbed by me).

11. Shloka 33: Maaya: That which makes it possible for something inexplicable to appear in my Being (as if apart from Me)without any corresponding Reality and which obscures (hides) my Being (in spite of my being present everywhere)should be regarded as my Maaya. (Strange that we imagine a snake on the rope in darkness, whereas the truth is the rope and not the snake!)(We appreciate the wonders of the world, without appreciating the power who instilled that wonder in the wonder!

12. Shloka 34: Omnipotency: Material and Efficient Cause (Upaadaana and Naimitthika Kaarana) of all Creation: Even though the beings are "materially made up" of the five great Elements (which are Me only), yet the elements are said to have "entered" them, similarly, I can be said to have "entered" them, while in reality, there is no being other than me! Nothing exists other than Me!

13. Shloka 35: Parabrahman is the only Truth and he is Omnipresent: Seekers into Truth of Aathma should enquire and find out that Truth (Sri Hari) alone exists everywhere and at all times.(Hands hold, legs move, wind blows,

Sun shines day in and day out without break; all because of the God behind them, not because of them per se!)

14. Assurance: Finally the Lord concludes that if Brahma firmly establishes this Doctrine about Parabrahman in his mind, he will never be overtaken by Ego etc.

15. Conclusion: The Chathuh shloki Bhaagavatham is a brief summary of the entire Bhaagavatham, in four cryptic verses! Bhaagavatha Puraanam only elaborates the contents of these four shlokaas with examples from real life to make the incomprehensible easily understood.

Jai Shri Krishna

Essentials of Hinduism

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

[This work is a shorter but complete version of the book, "The Hindu Way" brought out by M/S Pan Macmillan]

Basics

Hinduism is based on the spiritual principles and realisations of the sages, which over the length of time got recorded in the books called the Vedas. Unlike other religions, it has no human founder, and hence its date of origin can never be fixed; it has existed since the dawn of spiritual thoughts in the world. Although the term "Hindu" is of relatively late origin, it has been accepted to signify the religion of the ethnic Indians and their spread wherever in the world.

Hinduism does not claim any exclusive right over the spiritual truths it preaches, and it believes that a person can reach the spiritual goal through any path. This makes it accept every faith and religion with respect. Inclusiveness and universal acceptance, both as spiritual and social truth are the characteristic of Hinduism.

Who is a Hindu?

Being an ultimate inclusive religion, it is difficult to define Hinduism the way Islam or Christianity can be. However, for the sake of convenience, a Hindu is expected to have these core convictions:
1. Acceptance of the spiritual truths as preached in the Vedas, and elaborated in any of the sacred books of the Hindus.
2. The belief in the transmigratory nature of the individual soul till it attains mukti. This is the state of freedom from every kind of duality like birth and death, good and bad.
3. Acceptance of different paths of religions as ways to perfection.

In matters of religious and social practices, Hindus go by what the elders of the society practise.

a. Sacred Books

The Fountainhead of Hinduism: The Vedas

Hinduism is based on the teachings of the Vedas. These sacred books are the most ancient preserved literature of the world, and it is difficult to say when exactly these works were composed. According to educated guess, these are more than seven to eight thousand years old.

The contents of these books are the records of the spiritual realisation of the sages of that period. Some of the mantras of the Vedas, including the Gaytri mantra are quite popular and are recited regularly by millions.

The Vedas are also called Shruti (lit. heard), since they were passed down from the teacher to the disciple orally, and were considered too sacred to be written down. These are four in number: Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda, Atharva Veda. This division is based on poetic metres: Rigveda is in rik metre (a particular Vedic metre), Samaveda can be sung, Yajurveda is in Yajus metre (used as mantras during yajna), and Atharva Veda has composition both in prose and poetry.

Everything of Hinduism can be traced back to the Vedas. They contain spiritual truths, philosophy, devotion, mythology, rituals, code of conduct, ethics, poetry etc. Sages and philosophers of later ages elaborated the ideas expressed in the Vedas to enrich various class of literature.

The religious and social practices of the Hindus keep changing with time, but the eternal spiritual principles, as recorded in the Vedas, continue to be the same. This unique style of dynamic equilibrium gives Hinduism an orthodox core, but a flexible external.

Other Sacred Books

For thousands of years Hindus have been discussing and explaining various aspects of religion which has resulted in a huge mass of religious literature. The more important of these books are:

Upanishads: These are the last sections of the Vedas, but because of their special philosophical nature and importance, these are treated separately. These books contain the philosophical truths realised by the sages, which now form the philosophical base of Hinduism. The most important of these truths is the Oneness of everything -- sarvam khalu idam Brahma, and that the individual is one with the universal -- aham Brahma asmi.

It is believed that there are one hundred and eight Upanishads, but ten of them are more famous.

Epics: Ramayana and Mahabharata: These are the two sacred epics that have served as the hope, ideal and inspiration of the Hindus. Of these, Ramayana centres the life of Sri Rama, while Mahabharata is woven around the story of Kaurava-Pandava clan in which Sri Krishna plays an important role. Through narration, these sacred books highlight the struggle of an individual in holding on to religious principles in good times and also during crisis. In addition, these contain most other issues concerning religious life.

Many classics have been composed in every Indian and many South East Asian languages based on these two sacred epics.

The Gita is the most popular Hindu sacred book that can be treated as the handbook of Hinduism. Composed in mere seven hundred verses, it is a small part of the Mahabharata, but it stands in its own majesty of poetry, philosophy and spirituality. Devout Hindus recite it daily as a source of inspiration, and also chant it when someone dies.

The Puranas are eighteen in number and form the mythological base of the Hindus. These have around 5.5 lakh verses through which the popular stories of gods and goddesses are described. The most popular of these books is Srimad Bhagavata Purana which deals mainly with the story of Sri Krishna. Shiva Maha Purana is another popular work centring Lord Shiva.

The Puranas were composed to suit the needs of the masses for an easy understanding of the spiritual truths. Despite their mythological nature, they discuss philosophy, ethics and rituals of the Hindus in detail.

The Smritis are the law books of the Hindus which prescribe the personal and social code. The rules laid down in these books cover practically everything -- starting from the most trivial daily acts of an individual, through the duties of a king, to the highest philosophical wisdom that one may require to lead a good life. The aim of these books is to take a person to the highest spiritual realisation.

Unlike the codes of other religions, Smritis are not the dictates of God, or any divine personality, and hence they do not have the same veneration as the scriptures, or as the codes as practised in other religions. Sages like Manu took the more prevalent practices of the society and then gave them a religious orientation so that people identify themselves not only with goodness, but with religiosity too. The sages made sure to keep their respective Smritis in tune with the principles of the Vedas, even though these were written for a particular period of time.

There are innumerable Smritis of which the most famous is Manu Smriti, written around the second century B.C.E. The sages knew that a society ruled by archaic laws becomes stagnant. So, new Smritis were codified from time to time according to the need of the age. Unfortunately, no new Smriti has been written in the last thousand years or so.

The Tantras are mostly about Mother Worship through the ritualistic aspect of religion. Some of these books are devoted to Lord Shiva, and the rest are devoted to Shakti, the female principle of God. These books discuss ways and means to please Shakti so that one can attain the desired in life. However, some of the practices of Tantra do not meet social approval, and hence these are not as popular as other sacred books.

Most Hindu rituals are derived either from the Puranas or from Tantra traditions.

In addition to these, there are thousands of books which serve as the basis for various sampradaya (religious sects) of the Hindus.

b. Principles of Hinduism

Aim of Hinduism

The fundamental principle of Hinduism has been to lead a person towards mukti (freedom). But because not everyone is capable of taking up this great idea, Hinduism helps people improve their quality of life by having an ideal. There are four of these, popularly known as Purusartha (goals of life).
a. Dharma, Righteous living that results in a more meaningful life.
b. Artha, Acquisition of wealth through rightful means.
c. Kama, Enjoyment without transgressing the social and religious norms.
d. Moksha, Liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

The first of these three are for the householders, and the fourth one, spirituality, is for the tyagi (renunciates). It is expected that every Hindu would give up worldly attachments at some point of time to devote themselves fully to spirituality.

God

The supreme Reality in Hinduism is known as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence, Consciousness and Bliss), which carries two ideas -- the impersonal, and the personal. The Impersonal God is ever present and everywhere present God for whom no adjective can be employed. He is infinite, ever free, without a form, and beyond the grasp of the human mind. This aspect of God is also

known as nirguna nirakara Brahman (without any qualifying traits and form). This aspect of God can be experienced only in the highest non-dual state of meditation.

When this same Reality is perceived through mind, keeping one's individuality intact but pure, It is known as Saguna Sakara Brahman (God with form and qualities, or simply God), who is merciful, powerful, and with innumerable noble qualities. He is the omnipresent creator, preserver, and destroyer of everything.

In essence, both these aspects of God are same, but people want to perceive them differently according to their mental makeup.

The Divinities

The Personal aspect of God is worshipped by the Hindus in His different forms. Of these, Brahma is accepted as the Creator, Vishnu as the sustainer, and Shiva as the destroyer of the universe, although in essence they are same. Vishnu is also known as Narayana who is described as having incarnated many times in various forms. Two of His popular human incarnations are Rama and Krishna. The present day Hinduism worships mainly four forms of God: Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, and Krishna.

The creative principle of God is known as Shakti, the power of God. Also known as Mother, this aspect of God is worshipped variously as Durga, Kali, Lakshmi and others. Independent of these, Saraswati is universally worshipped as the goddess of learning.

In addition to these, there are millions of gods and goddesses who represent the various aspects of divinity. According to some, there are in total thirty three crore (three hundred and thirty million) of them, which allows a Hindu to choose a God of his liking.

Maya

Why and how God creates this universe, is a problem that has baffled philosophers since ancient times. For Hindus also, Creation is a mystery of God that cannot be satisfactorily explained. Different philosophers offer different theories, but the most popular of them is the theory of Maya, according to which, God creates the Universe with the help of His own inscrutable Maya (the great divine power), which by its very nature cannot be described.

Maya is the Divine Ignorance which exists both at individual and cosmic level. Maya is responsible for the wrong perception that people have regarding the

presence or absence of a thing. Also, the continuance of the universe is due to Maya; and time, space, events, name and form are all products of Maya.

Maya exists only till one does not realise the Spiritual Truth. Thus, it exists and yet it does not exist. It can be compared with the darkness of night that makes objects invisible, or makes them appear differently. When one wants to see this darkness with the help of the darkness, it cannot be seen; and when one wants to see it with the help of light, it vanishes. Just like that, maya cannot be seen through maya, and it ceases to exist when the divine light of knowledge dawns upon a person.

The existence of maya as real, unreal, or part real is accepted by most Hindu philosophers, but they differ about its exact nature. This gives rise to many schools of thoughts in Vedanta.

Creation

Hindus believe that life is eternal, and that it did not spring out of nothing at some point of time, as science and many religions will have us believe.

The most popular theory of creation is that it comes into existence by the will of God through Maya, and what we call Creation, is in reality projection. Nature (called variously as maya, Prakriti, and Shakti) is without beginning and without end. At some point of time this gross universe goes back to its finer state, remains there for a certain period, and then once again gets projected to manifest all that is there in the nature. This cyclic creation-dissolution has continued since eternity, and would continue eternally.

Two theories are advanced to explain the process of Creation. According to one, the will of God creates Brahma, who gets down to the job of creation by meditating on the principles and process of Creation that was there in the previous cycle. With time, the creation blooms in all its majesty.

The second popular theory with the philosophers is that there is Prakriti, the Universal Mother Nature, which is composed of inertness (tamas), activity (rajas), and purity (sattva) in balance. For a divine mysterious reason, whenever an imbalance takes place in the triad of these qualities, they start combining with each other to give birth to more and more gross objects till the subtle aspects of earth, fire, water, space, and air are produced. These five are not the physical objects that one sees, but are finer, and are at the root of everything that is there in the universe. The final creation of the objects of this universe proceeds from the combination of these five elements in a set order, and every object of the universe, including the mind, contains these five elements in varying proportion.

Incarnation

God is beyond Creation and causation, but He expresses Himself in various forms, including human beings to give a push to spiritual evolution through His divine powers. This is known as avatara. Whenever God incarnates, He gives the knowledge of spiritual path best suited for that age. It is then that people with devotional inclination feel the warmth of Lord's love, compassion, majesty etc., and then turn towards Him with intensity.

God would continue to incarnate till there is creation and created beings.

Atman

Vedanta, the founding philosophy of the Hindus, is developed on the texts of Upanishads, Gita, and Brahmasutras, according to which, the supreme Reality, known as Brahman, alone exists -- Sarvam khalvidam Brahma. At the micro level, Brahman is known as Atman, the conscious principle present in every living being, and so by its very nature Atman can neither be created, nor destroyed. It has all powers, purity, omnipresence, and is full of all knowledge. But due to maya, Atman mistakenly identifies itself with the body, mind and senses. It is then that it becomes transmigratory, and is known as jivatman, which is equivalent to the popular idea of the soul.

The jivatman identifies itself with various kinds of action and their results, and thus goes on creating karma -- good and bad. These karma cloud the pure nature of Atman, and make him forgetful of its true nature, making it enjoys and suffer in the world. However, since the atman is infinite and eternal, it passes and evolves through various bodies and finally attains perfection and freedom.

There are three major approaches in Vedanta philosophy that discuss the nature of Atman. According to Advaita Vedantins, Atman is identical with the Supreme Reality, Brahman; and the multiplicity that is seen everywhere is not real, but is imaginary due to Maya. For many other sages, Atman is related to God in the same way as a leaf is connected with a tree. This view is called Visishta Advaita, which was popularised by Ramanujacharya. According to some others, Atman and God are two eternally separate beings and they have the relationship as between a servant and his master. This is called Dvaita, popularised by Madhvacharya.

Hinduism accepts that the true individuality of a person does not lie with his body or the mind, but with Atman; and the real consciousness does not belong to the mind, but to the Atman. It is the reflected consciousness of the Atman in the mind (which serves like a mirror) that makes one perceive and

know the objects of the world. When one's mind is cleansed through sadhana, it serves as a perfect reflector of the spiritual reality.

Karma

The most profound doctrine of the Hindus is the Law of Karma, according to which 'one gets what one earns', and, what one thinks is as important as what one does in shaping one's future.

This law implies that the disparity in the world amongst people is not an act of God, but is due to one's own doing. One thus has the freedom to change one's situation by performing right action, and thinking right thoughts. So, ideas like destiny, predestination and fate have no place in Hinduism. The grace of God, like the widespread rains, is everywhere, and one only has to make use of it through one's actions and thoughts to reap the benefit.

There is no historical point when the karma of an individual became operative; it is without beginning as maya and soul are. Like a flowing river, one may not know its source of origin, but one can go across it through spiritual practices.

Rebirth

One important fall out of the Law of Karma is the continuation of life in some form to work out one's karma. At the time of death, the individual Atman (jiva) leaves the body, along with the mind to take up a new body. Depending on one's actions and attitude, one may be born in any of the visible or invisible forms, but the best way to work out one's karma is through a human body.

The cycle of birth and death continues till one realises one’s true nature as Atman. This knowledge is popularly known as Self realisation. The ultimate goal of Hindu religion is to take every person to that state of knowledge when one realises his nature and goes beyond the cycle of birth and death.

Heaven and Hell

Heaven and hell are places of temporary residence where the soul (which takes up a body suitable for the place to enjoy or suffer) lands in its journey towards mukti -- the final liberation from the law of karma. Since no one knows how these places look, the poets of the Puranas gave a free flight to their imagination to construct various heavens and hells, even though they do not have any significance in true spirituality.

Mukti

The goal of every soul is freedom from every kind of bondage. The ignorance, inherent in every mind about one's true nature (the eternally pure, conscious, and free atman), gives birth to identification with the non-eternal. This gives rise to desires to acquire the pleasurable, and run away from the unpleasant. This results in an individual's compulsion to act and work, which in turn causes more ignorance, more desires and more bondage. The cycle goes on.

The aim of Hinduism is to make a person conscious of this vicious cycle of ignorance-desire-action, which ultimately binds one to the law of karma and makes him suffer and enjoy variously. So, the spiritual practices in Hinduism are aimed at taking one beyond selfish action, and in making him absolutely unselfish. It is only then that one becomes fit for self realisation, which leads to mukti.

Jivanmukti

The greatest contribution of Hinduism has been the idea that a person can attain the highest state of realisation and go beyond pleasure and pain, sorrow and hope, heaven and hell, good and bad even while living. In that state one realises oneself to be one with the supreme Reality -- Aham Brahma Asmi – "I am the Supreme Reality". This is known as Jivanmukti – free while alive.

If not for anything else, the Hindu race must be preserved and respected for possessing this highest spiritual truth. The echo of this truth has been heard many a times in other religions too, but it has never entered the mainstream of any other religious thought.

Ethics

Hindu ethics is mostly elaborated in Smriti class of literature and deal with every possible issue that a person may come across in life. These codes of conduct are not based on what one sage said or did, but on the realistic ground of the ultimate spiritual truth of becoming all inclusive. The guiding principle behind these ethics and moral code is unselfishness. The goal of Indian spirituality is oneness, which implies that a person who is established in this knowledge, or wants to acquire this state, can never have emotions like jealousy, greed, ambition, hatred, etc., which are the signs of exclusiveness.

Sin

Sin, as a theological principle, does not play any role in Hinduism. The general term for it is adharma, to indulge in which implies transgression of certain code of conduct. Since these codes are not permanent in nature, transgressions can never be sin against God, as the term is generally understood. Sin is more like a mistake that can be corrected through penance and right action.

c. Practices

Philosophy

Philosophy is known as darshan (lit. to see) in Hindu religion. Speculative philosophy and word play is a strict no-no in it. A philosophy to be acceptable in Hinduism has to be based on the Vedas, and has to be preached by a sage. There are six such Vedic philosophies – Samkhya by Kapil, Yoga by Patanjali, Nyaya by Gautama, Vaiseshika by Kanada, Mimamsa by Jaimini, and Vedanta by Vyasa. Of these, Vedanta has three major and some minor schools of thoughts, and it has come to be the chief philosophy of the Hindus.

Other than these Vedic philosophies, there is the Charvaka philosophy of the materialists, and some schools based on Shiva and Shakti.

Sects

Hinduism accepts inequality as a fact of existence. No two objects are identical, and no two minds can ever be same. So, the needs and aspirations of people can never be the same. Add to that a high number of sacred books, and a higher number of Divinities, and the result would be a very high number of paths of spirituality. In fact, as many persons, so many paths, is the approach of Hinduism. This results in a very higher number of sects in Hinduism as compared to other religions. Each of these sects has its own spiritual ideal, scripture, and practices. However, the ideals and scriptures of all these sects are based on the spiritual truths of the Vedas only.

Rituals and customs

Although many consider Hinduism to be a ritualistic religion, the fact is that rituals are a non essential thing in it. Rituals depend heavily on the local customs, and also on the sects to which one belongs. They are also dynamic in nature, and hence they cannot be universalised.

The general practice of a Hindu in religious matters is to follow the elders of the family or the society. Some Hindus outgrow these traditions and take up the practices of their Guru whom they choose as the spiritual guide.

In spite of all this variety, there are some practices which most Hindus adhere to. Respecting Ganga, repeating Aum, and performing Samskara (purificatory rites), and certain daily rituals, are some of the more popular practices.

Amongst the daily rituals, the most important is the performance of panch mahayajna (the five great daily sacrifices): Worship and meditation, offering to forefathers, serving the society¸ caring for animals and birds, and study of scriptures.

Symbol

Aum, written in Sanskrit, is the universal sacred symbol of Hinduism. It is the nearest equivalent of God, and through its three letters of composition, A, U, M, signifies everything that is there in the universe. It is believed that japam (mental repetition) of this symbol, and a meditation on it can get a person everything that he wants in this world, and this can also take a person to the highest spiritual realisation.

Worship

A common mind can identify itself with the great only through a concrete object. It is due to this that visiting sacred places and performing some form of worship or adoration is popular in every religion.

Hindus believe that God is present everywhere, and yet they worship anything that appeals to their mind. The object of worship ranges from rocks through trees to images. This sense of identifying God with external objects is not due to ignorance, but due to a strong feeling of seeing the manifestation of the Divine even in objects and images.

Ganesh, Vishnu, Shiva, Sun and Durga are known as Pancha devata and their worship is mandatory at the time of ritualistic worship.

Festivals

There are thousands of festivals in India to celebrate various occasions. But unlike in other religions, Hinduism does not have a set of universally fixed festivals for all. Different festivals are important to different people depending on the sect or the region to which they belong. However, Holi (the festival of colours), and Diwali (the festival of lights) have universal appeal amongst the Hindus. Shivaratri, Sri Krishna Janmashtami, and Ramanavami are also treated as festival days by most Hindus.

There are also sacred days like Ekadashi (eleventh day of the lunar fortnight), lunar and solar eclipse etc. on which special rituals are observed.

Food

Hindus have been quite fussy about the rightness of food over the ages, but the choice of food is local in nature. However, most Hindus (at least till now) avoid taking uchhistha (food already taken by someone).

Castes

Since ancient times, Hindu religion has been wrongly tagged with the caste system. Caste is essentially a socio-economical system which was taken up by religion to detail svadharma (the duties of a person) for a smooth spiritual journey. The goal was to take the lowest in the social hierarchy slowly towards the highest spiritual ideals. But the plot was lost somewhere. Today caste system stands as the great blunder of the Hindu society that chose to neglect its masses.

Addendum to Evolution

Origins of the World by Eastern Speculative Philosophy
By BS Murthy

One might approach this postulation as an addendum to evolution for it comes in the wake of the great works of the past. It would seem logical that any proposition about evolution cannot bypass the idea of creation, buttressed with religious belief by those closer to the beginnings of life. Just the same, though all religions propagate the word that God created the world, nevertheless their scriptures differ about the way He went about it. Given the religious assertion that God is the personification of perfection, one need to reckon whether He would have created an imperfect world such as ours! Besides, how come His intellect that placed planets in the orbits failed to visualize a quake free earth that is volcano prone as well! The scriptures that picture Him as the All Merciful, however, prevaricate when it comes to the unjust 'species feeding upon species' way of His creation.

Would it not then make a case for viewing with suspicion the religious assertion that the world was His creation? That was what many a Hindu seer of yore was obviously at, going by their advocacy that the species of the world was the result of an evolutionary process. One such theory of evolution in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad reads thus - He had no pleasure either: so when alone one has no pleasure. He desired a companion. He became as large as a woman and man embracing. He made that self split (pat-) into two: from that husband (pati) and wife (patni) came to be. She realized: "How can he couple with me when he begot me from himself? Ah, I must hide!" She became a cow, the other a bull, and so he coupled with her. From that cattle were born. She became a mare, the other a stallion; she became a she-donkey, the other a he-donkey: and so he coupled with her. From that solid-hoofed animals were born... - 'The Upanisads' by Valerie J Roebuck published by Penguin Books India. This could as well be man's first thesis on evolution.

Well Spencer, Lamarck, Darwin and others of our times could have breached the religious idea of creation with the collective force of pure reasoning. But would their standard of evolution thus erected on the land of religion stand up to logic? After all, the three millennia or more of anthropological data that modern man is in possession fails to indicate an iota of variation in the existing species not to speak of the evolution of the new! That being the case, could it be then the world came into being on its own, as it were! Well if it were so, the question that arises is, wouldn't have the first men made their progeny privy to that story? But that didn't happen either, as we don't even have hearsay to go by about our origins. Besides, the religious routes of

creation shown by the later generations all led us into blind alleys. Thus, far removed from our beginnings, we had to figure it out ourselves as to how we came into being. After all, it's that quest for his origins that lead men to the theories of evolution.

Nevertheless, won't that be like putting the cart before the horse, for earth is the only planet known to nourish life. Won't it be imperative to try to assess whether the way the earth itself came into being would have had a bearing on the evolution of its species? It would seem there could be but mere space in the beginning - infinite and empty. At some stage, its gathering cosmic charge, having become boundless, would have disintegrated into infinite number nebulous stars of vast proportions. Needless to say, these stars, in spite of being nebulous, would have acquired a definitive magnetic moment of immense intensity of their own. And the attendant magnetic field could have kept the residual cosmic charge around them at bay. In time, the interplay of magnetic moments would have fragmented the residual nebulous energy around these stars into their planets. In the end, it could be the powerful magnetic thrust the stars would have exerted on each other, that caused their cosmic drift along with their planetary formations in tow.

In was in that altered station, far removed from the cosmic bosom that an intense centripetal force would have come to exert on the sun and its planets in their nebulous state. Over the years, this phenomenon would have occasioned their nebulous energy to compact into spherical formations. This in turn would have brought to bear the centrifugal forces on the sun and its planets that tended them to shed some of their heat energy. That in turn would have occasioned the peripheral cooling of the planets. In time, all the expelled nebulous heat would have galvanized itself as the moon to turn into the satellite of the earth. It would appear that the concept of astrology could be but the appreciation of this cosmic phenomenon.

Be that as it may, where to begin to find out what could have helped the mother earth to bring beings into being? Well won't it be in order to assume that the spread-split-steady syndrome that was behind the formation of the solar system would have been at work in the evolution of the species as well? Won't the procreative process, the feature of perpetuation of the species subscribe to this? Of course, since neither custom stales nor age alters the procreative process of the species, we might reckon that it is in that process must lay the clues to the origins of beings.

Well the world in its beginnings would have been but wilderness of earth, water and air - the gross elements of nature - that would have been evolved owing to the altered cosmic equations. The day and night phenomenon on the earth would have perpetually subjected these elements to some annealing stress - while days would have warmed them by the sun-rays,

nights could have gripped them in their cold embrace. However, the landmass, once it got solidified to some depth, would have rested on its laurels but for the jerk of an earthquake or a jolt by a volcano. On the other hand, air and water, given their volatile state, would have been perpetually stressed and strained by the day-night syndrome. Thus, the constant impingement of heat and cold on air and water, both containing oxygen and hydrogen, would have come to impact upon the chemistry of them both in the climatic laboratory. In the end, it would have been the atmospheric disturbances like cyclones and hurricanes that would have brought about the fusion between the much strained water molecules and the turbulent atoms of the air.

The outcome of this fusion could have altered the molecular structure of countless water particles in a way to originate the organisms - O, that we might call onams. As the seas played the mother to this earthly union, onams could have embraced their waters, though in time many might have made their way into the sister rivers as well. But the cyclonic and such atmospheric convulsions that fathered them would have been ever tending many of them into the atmosphere. Likewise, the ocean tides and the flooding rivers would have displaced many an onam onto the ground around. Any way, it didn't hurt them. Being fundamental organisms, the onams would have been unicellular in construct and microscopic in size, sans digestive mechanism of note. Besides, their micro construct would have only needed miniscule diet for self-sustenance. Thus irrespective of their station they would have come to survive on their self-secretions in a unitary and conflict free environment. That was how the onams would have come into being and came to exist as such. Thus, we might reckon that the instinct of the species to prey upon their fellow species would have certainly been a non-onamic character.

Having thus emerged from the nebulous state of non-being, the onamic state of being would have been one of stagnant being. However, as nature could have caused more and more of them to come into being, in time, there could have been the onamic clusters in their trillions all over. At some stage, nature itself might have come to grips with its own waywardness, exemplified by the regulation of the seasons. And all that would have changed the character of the prevailing environment itself, affecting the climatic conditions conducive for furthering the onamic generation. As nature would have ceased to occasion their propagation, the onams could have been compelled to self-generate so as to remain in being. This could as well be the harbinger of the evolutionary process that could have led to the emergence of the species

But how come the unicellular onams could have multiplied into a wide variety multi-cellular species? And then, where from did the plant life emerge? Well the ebbs would have retrieved into the high seas some onams that the tides could have washed ashore. Likewise, the receding river waters would have

salvaged some of its onams from the riverbanks that the floods inundated. This great escape would have exposed such of those water onams to an amphibious experience of being. Nonetheless, owing to this recurring phenomenon, many in their millions would have been periodically left stranded in the unfamiliar environs of the beachheads and riverbanks. In time, the stimuli of their clustered existence would have induced in the onams of the world the instinct to spread. This in turn would have imbibed in them the urge to split. The very instinct for the individual spread would have insensibly led to the collective onamic surge. Needless to stress, this could have been achieved with each yielding space to the other in order to gain the same for the stability of the self. This could well be the harbinger of life on earth, though in its rudimentary form. What is more, this characteristic of yielding to gain seems to have shaped the nature of beings during their evolutionary period and beyond. However, with their imbibed instinct to stay in air, the atmospheric onams would have had a free access to the world at large and thus would have been less urged to spread. Thus, the atmospheric onams would not have come to feel the need to split at that stage.

As the earthly onams began to gain in size, they would have needed extra secretions for sustenance that the system was unaccustomed to generate. Besides, their state of growth would have undermined the onamic sense of safety their unicellular compactness provided. Understandably, all this would have ensured that the systemic pulls and pressures came to bear upon the onamic growth. This, in turn, could have forced their survival instinct to cap further growth. Thus, at that state of growth, there could have been duality of purpose in the enlarged onamic organisms - the acquired habit to grow in order to gain and the innate need to remain small so as to survive. Naturally, this clash of interests would have induced fission in the system that could have lead to the eventual rupture of the mechanism itself. It was thus, the onams could have split into two and that would have ushered in the second stage of evolution. Understandably, the coming into being of two organisms - plunams - in place of one, would have enabled the agenda of unrestrained onamic growth. Dictated by the inherited urge, the plunams would have pursued the old onamic agenda of growth till the need arose for yet another plunamic parting of ways. This phenomenon of onamic split would have in time led to the plunamic proliferation of exponential proportions on the ground as well as in waters. In the process, though being unicellular, the plunams would have begun to experience a vague sense of biological difference amongst themselves. However, the atmospheric onams would have been some way away from the plunamic state of evolution on the earth.

Nonetheless, it appears, in spite of the plunamic evolution, the onamic urge for surge remained unsullied. And abetted by habit, it would have indeed turned into a plunamic obsession. In turn, all this might have enabled the plunamic organisms to gain some sense of memory. It is but natural that the

urge to grow and the need to split would have impacted on the plunamic memory to impart a sense of separation to it. Thus, it could have been only time before the plunams would have seen the means to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable - that was by splitting within their body itself so as to augment their individual growth! Thus, the plunams would have started splitting within themselves into two organisms - qunams. Thus, in a continuing process, the emerging qunams in the individual plunamic bosoms would have split in turn, to cause the cellular multiplication within the plunamic bodies. Hence, the evolution of the qunams in the plunamic frames at once would have enabled the overall organic growth of the latter. This qunamic state of being could be called the third stage of evolution of beings that was probably the first triumph of something of a mind over matter.

In time, the lack of cohesion amongst the individual qunams of the enlarged plunams would have ruined the plan in the making. Obviously, at some point of time in the growing process, the organic self-secretions wouldn't have sufficed to sustain the overall plunamic health, not to speak of the qunamic growth. Driven by the imbibed onamic urge to survive, the individual qunams in the plunamic bosoms could have begun to feed on their weaker cousins. Incidentally, this altered nature of intake would have occasioned the need for the plunams to develop some digestive system of their own. However, this unexpected turn of events would have pitted the stronger qunams against the not so strong of a given plunam. To begin with, the lesser breed would have made a common cause to ward off the stronger elements amongst them. The emergence thus of qunamic sub-groups within the plunamic frames would have caused the functional imbalance in their body organisms. This in turn would have led to the schism in the plunamic systems that would have caused the eventual split, though of a different kind.

Whereas the original onamic split that brought about the plunams into being was for the functional growth, the plunamic split that followed, on the relative qunamic strength, was for the systemic survival. Thus would have come into being plunams stratified by their relative strengths. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the relatively stronger qunams in a given plunamic organism feeding on their weaker cousins would have continued thus occasioning the perennial parting of ways. And this in turn would have in time ushered in countless plunamic cousins of varied strengths. What was more, the compulsion of the weaker qunams to separate from the stronger would have at length led to the reverse phenomenon whereby many plunams were reduced to the original onamic unicellular and microscopic state of amoebae!

This split syndrome would not have helped ease the plunamic condition in any way for their qunams could have tended to negate each other, though in the end the stronger overpowered the not so strong amongst them. Needless to say, with the relatively weak qunams having been consumed in time, the

resistance against mutual qunamic poaching in the individual plunamic bosoms could have resulted in an eventual stalemate. Besides, the qunamic need to prey upon the weak and escape being one for the strong would have tended to weaken the plunamic strength at all levels. Inevitably this would have hindered their collective survival not speak of growth. Thus this qunamic fight for survival within the system would have brought the plunamic structures to the brink of extinction. However, in the end, the survival instinct that would have become the second nature with all plunams by then could have averted the collective calamity for all of them.

After all, it was this plunamic urge for survival that would have induced in them the urge to devour others without as a way out. And that could have given the struggle for survival amongst the world of plunams an altogether different dimension. Obviously, to avert the threat the stronger plunams posed, the lesser kind would have tried to escape into the anonymity of the hinterland or plunged deeper down into the safety of the seas. But as the plunams got scattered in their bid to survive, their very survival would have been threatened just the same what with the scarcity of the relatively weaker around to feed upon. Thus would have developed the need for the plunams for extra reach for preying upon the weaker while themselves keeping away from the stronger. When at some stage, the plunams of the world could have acquired near parity of mobility, it would have been back to the square one for all of them. This in turn would have forced all of them to find ways and means to ensure their individual survival.

All this would have made it imperative for the plunams to imbibe new attributes, the forerunners of the characteristic survival instincts of the individual species. Thus, the survival instinct would have impelled the plunams to grow big or turn bizarre besides acquiring the requisite speed to survive in a given environment. The developments on the ground would have invariably hurt the atmospheric organisms still in the onamic state for they would have made ready pickings for the plunams of the world as and when the winds could have brought them down. Well in time, their own survival instinct would have enabled them to reinvent the wheel to cope up with the hazards on the earth. However, when evolved as the atmospheric plunams, ironically, their ability to be airborne would have limited their size as well

This brings to the fore the question whether the plant life preceded, succeeded or contemporary to the plunamic evolution. If there were plant life existing in the plunamic world, would there have been the need for the plunams to prey upon each other in their struggle for survival. Wouldn't have all those plants come in handy for the plunams to feed upon? Thus, it could be inferred that as there were no plants in place at the plunamic state of evolution, the plunams, in their bid to survive, would have been forced to feed upon each other. For that reason, the eventual evolution of the species that

came to depend on the plant produce as their means of survival could be but of post plunamic evolution. Be that as it may, for the plunams it would have been a period of growth as their bigger bellies would have occasioned greater appetites and their improved reach could have enabled them greater catch. In time, all those dinner parties would have pushed the plunams to the brink all again, as the stronger and the weaker alike facing extinction. Well the need of the strong for more prey would have tended to deplete the ranks of the weak, in turn tending the former to famish and the latter to extinct. It was thus all plunams, more so the weaker ones would have felt the need for procreating their own ilk for their prey!

This could have been brought about by the more vulnerable weaker quanams in the plunamic bosoms by tending to acquire female attributes that in turn would have galvanized the stronger ones towards the male tendencies. In the end the plunamic splits would have come to assume male-female dimension with the stronger qunams tending to be male plunams and the weaker, their female counterparts. With the qunamic evolution having acquired biological differentiation, there would have come into being male and female plunams that got together to procreate the preys for themselves. This at once could have brought an end to the qunamic schisms within the organism that would have helped the plunams recoup themselves to resume poaching the weaker lot that too would have got multiplied through procreative means. In time, this would have removed the plunamic need to feed upon what was self-procreated, and thus the progeny would have been left to grow up and in turn further the flock. After all, what was needed was a single male in their midst for the females to keep procreating in their numbers. In spite of the new procreative multiplication, the plunams would have been still pressured for their survival for the demand for prey would have not matched with the supply of the same. Owing to this or out of sheer force of habit some plunams might have continued with the practice of eating their own produce.

However, the seeds of solace for some in the plunamic world would have been laid in an unexpected way. It could be expected that the downpour of the monsoons would have embedded some of the male and female plunams of all dispensations in the soil. At length, the minerals of the soil wealth would have altered the biological characteristics of those entrapped plunams. Brought together by the sub-soil conditions, the males and females of a given creed, and or hybrids of sorts, in due course would have evolved themselves into seeds that the soil conditions would have fertilized as plants in time. And of course, the seeds of a given category would have imbibed the respective or mixed quanamic features and the plunamic attributes would have given raise to the individual plant characteristics. In time, as some plunams would have found it expedient to feed on the sprouting vegetation, in turn their survival instinct coupled with their organic habit of growth would have shaped the latter into the varied vegetation on the earth. Like wise, as the

atmospheric plunams would have been hard pressed for prey, what with their earthly counterparts on the growth path, they would have evolved as birds with the ability to swoop down on their pray and spirit away when threatened. In time, in spite of it all, it would have dawned on all the plunams that being on the run alone was no guarantee for their survival, and thus they would have been ever at augmenting their attributes to acquire prey and escape from being one. Eventually, it was this process that would have enabled the plunams to evolve into various species of the world with individual survival instincts and preying abilities. The loose cannon that the evolution of species was, it was but natural that dinosaurs with their insatiable appetites appeared in time. With their reach and approach they would have played havoc in the animal kingdom as it got evolved. But as their pry would have run for cover in the wide world, at some stage, the dinosaurs could have found their prey so scarce as to survive. And in time, they would have become extinct for the same reason.

What about man, the acme of evolution? It would seem that with the weaker ones amongst them having gone into the hinterland, to escape being their prey, the plunams of the stronger onams, would have monopolized the seashores and the riverbanks. Feeding on their cousins that were washed ashore or grounded by the winds these privileged plunams would have had it easy and it could be this lack of threat from the others and the ready availability of prey that would have made the evolutionary process of these apart and unique. While the survival and sustenance syndrome alone could have governed the evolution of the rest of the onams into various species, these strong with no such constraints by and large, would have evolved into the thinking animal that is man. If the evolution of the animal kingdom was marked by the relative strength and speed so as to survive, the hallmark of human evolution was the furtherance of strength through cerebral power to enable domination. Thus while survival instinct would govern the animal behaviour, self-interest could rule the human conduct.

While the evolution of the animal kingdom itself framed the laws of the jungle, man had to evolve his own framework of rules so as to coexist. And the subconscious of the procreative process, symbolized by gives and takes, would have shaped his initial conduct. But at some stage, some sense of insecurity would have come to dominate his conscious mind that insensibly altered the boundaries of his subconscious comfort zone of give and take. Wanting to gain more to secure against imaginary threats and concede less and less as if to avoid the feared erosion and/or both became the credo of man that narrowed the give and take zone of human harmony. In time, in man, the urge to gain became bereft of the purpose to gain and the need to retain lost the sense of the need itself. Inevitably, in the end, man came to bring misery upon him and inflict injury on the world of the species.

However, it is worth noting that the Hindu puranas would have it rather differently with regard to the evolution of human nature as pictured in the Dasa Avatars - the ten incarnations in this world of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Hindu Deity. The first of His incarnations was as the fish, Mastya, in water, then the amphibious tortoise, Koorma, followed by the pig, Varaaha, on the land. Then it was the half man-half lion, Narasimha, the pygmean man, Vamana, the intemperate man, Parasurama, the principled man, Sri Rama, the pragmatic man, Sri Krishna, the enlightened man, The Buddha, and finally the yet to come destroyer of a man, Kalki. Going by the said progression of the Lord's incarnations, one might infer what was hinted in the Dasa Avatars was indeed the process of evolution on the earth. Given that the concept of Vishnu's Avatars, propagated by the puranas, came to be a feature of the Hindu belief well before the advent of The Buddha, one might agree that the theory of evolution was not all that modern after all.

Guru Gita

Article & Translation by P. R. Kannan

Introduction

Traditionally all dharmas are unveiled to us in Upanishads, Puranas and epics through the medium of teachings of Guru to Sishya. Sri Guru Gita is a blazing milestone in this tradition. It occurs in 274 slokas by way of Uma Maheswara Samvada in Skanda Puranam, Brahma Samhita, Uttara Khandam. Here Lord Siva himself rapturously enlightens Devi Parvati on the unique greatness of Guru. All our sacred texts unanimously proclaim that Guru embodies the Supreme Principle, he guides the disciple with love and discipline on the tortuous spiritual path, he recognises the varying equipment and requirements of every Adhikari (qualified) disciple, he identifies and removes the pitfalls accordingly and grants the ultimate fulfilment. In a famous verse Guru Gita states unequivocally that Guru is one embodiment in which Brahma, Vishna and Maheswara express themselves and the Supreme Brahman shines brilliantly. It emphasises that without serving at the feet of Guru and earning his grace, no spiritual advancement is possible. Even Sage Narada, though well-versed in all scriptures, needed the grace of Guru Sanatkumara for gaining real insight into Brahman, so says Chandogya Upanishad. All saints have also stressed this in their teachings. Upanishads and histories of great souls are replete with actual instances of Guru's grace going beyond all imagination and achieving the impossible in a trice. Devotees of Kanchi Sankara Matham are only too familiar with such direct experiences with the Jagadgurus adorning the Peetham.

Guru Gita commences with the question of Parvati to Siva with reference to Guru Mahatmyam:

केन मार्गेण भो स्वामिन् देही ब्रह्ममयो भवेत् ।

तत्कृपां कुरु मे स्वामिन् नमामि चरणौ तव ॥ (१:६)

"O Swami (Lord)! Which is the path that leads the jiva imprisoned in body to the state of Brahman? Please be gracious enough to tell me about that. I prostrate at your feet." (1:6)

Siva replies:

मम रूपासि देवि त्वं त्वद्-भक्त्यर्थं वदाम्यहम् ।

लोकोपकारकः प्रश्नो न केनापि कृतः पुरा ॥ (१:७)

"O Devi! You are of my form. In view of your devotion I shall tell you. The question you have asked is for the benefit of mankind and not asked by anyone before." Siva now expounds on the greatness of Guru. (1:7)

Who is Guru?

गुकारश्चा-न्धकारस्तु रुकारस्-तन्-निरोध-कृत् ।

अन्धकार-विनाशित्वाद्-गुरुरित्य्-अभिधीयते ॥ (१:३३)

"The letter 'Gu' means darkness and 'Ru' stands for its remover. Guru is so called because he destroys darkness (of ignorance)." (1:33)

गुकारश्च गुणातीतो रूपातीतो रुकारकः ।

गुण-रूप-विहीनत्वाद्-गुरुरित्य्-अभिधीयते ॥ (१:३४)

"The letter 'Gu' refers to attaining the state beyond Gunas (the three Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas). The letter 'Ru' denotes the state beyond forms (Rupa). Guru is so called because he is devoid of Gunas and Rupa (attributes and forms). (1:34)

गुकारः प्रथमो वर्णो मायादि-गुण-भासकः ।

रुकारोऽस्ति परं ब्रह्म माया-भ्रान्ति-विमोचकम् ॥ (१:३५)

"The first letter 'Gu' explains the attributes of Maya etc. The letter 'Ru' is the Supreme Brahman, which removes delusion of Maya." (1:35)

The first of these three verses describes Guru as the Light dispelling the darkness of Agnana; the second refers to his guiding the disciple beyond the world of names, forms and attributes; the third praises Guru as the ultimate remover of the veil of Maya and its subtle effects.

करुणा खड्ग-पातेन छित्वा पाशाष्टकं शिशोः ।

सम्यग्-आनन्द-जनकः सद्गुरुः सोऽभिधीयते ॥ (२:२१)

"One who rends asunder the eightfold bond with the sword of compassion and delivers the baby of Supreme Bliss is called Sadguru." (2:21)

Guru Mahima

गुरुर्-ब्रह्मा गुरुर्-विष्णुर्-गुरुर्-देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:४६)

"Guru is Brahma; Guru is Vishnu; Guru is Siva Maheswara; Guru is indeed the Supreme Brahman. Obeisance to Guru." (1:46)

अज्ञान-तिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञाना-ञ्जन-शलाकया ।

चक्षुर्-उन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:४७)

"Obeisance to Guru, by whom the eye of the one blinded in dense darkness is opened with the stick of collyrium of Gnana." (1:47)

अखण्ड-मण्डला-कारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।

तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:४८)

“Obeisance to Guru, by whom the principle ‘Tat’ (That, denoting the Brahman) was shown; the universe of moving and stationery objects in unbroken cycle is permeated uniformly by ‘Tat’.” (1:48)

अनेक-जन्म-संप्राप्त-कर्म-बन्ध-विदाहिने ।

ज्ञानानल-प्रभावेन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:६३)

“Obeisance to Guru, who burns away the bonds of karma acquired in many births with the power of the fire of knowledge.” (1:63)

न गुरोर्-अधिकं तत्वं न गुरोर्-अधिकं तपः ।

न गुरोर्-अधिकं ज्ञानं तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:६५)

“Obeisance to Guru, higher than whom there is no truth, no austerity nor knowledge.” (1:65)

मन्-नाथः श्रीजगन्नाथः मद्-गुरुः श्रीजगद्गुरुः ।

ममात्मा सर्व-भूतात्मा तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ (१:६६)

“Obeisance to Guru, who bestows on me the experience that my lord is the Lord of the universe; my Guru is the Guru of the universe; and my own soul is indeed the soul in all beings.” (1:66)

ध्यान-मूलं गुरोर्-मूर्तिः पूजा-मूलं गुरोः पदम् ।

मन्त्र-मूलं गुरोर्-वाक्यं मुक्ति-मूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥ (१:७४)

“The form of Guru is the object of meditation; the feet of Guru are the object of worship; the instruction of Guru is mantra; the grace of Guru is the means of Liberation.” (1:74)

अत्रिनेत्रः शिवः साक्षात् द्विबाहुश्च हरिः स्मृतः ।

यो अचतुर्-वदनो ब्रह्मा श्रीगुरुः कथितः प्रिये ॥ (१:८०)

“Beloved! Guru is indeed said to be Siva without three eyes, Hari with two arms and Brahma without four faces.” (1:80)

कुलानां कुलकोटीनां तारकस्-तत्र तत्-क्षणात् ।

अतस्तं सद्-गुरुं ज्ञात्वा त्रिकालं-अभिवादयेत् ॥ (१:८३)

“Guru is the spiritual protector of lineages till their last end, whom he blesses in just a second. Hence one should respect that Sadguru and prostrate to him all three times (morning, noon and evening).” (1:83)

यस्य स्मरण-मात्रेण ज्ञानं-उत्पद्यते स्वयम् ।

स एव सर्व-संपत्तिस्-तस्मात्-संपूजयेद्-गुरुम् । (१:४३)

“Guru, by the very thought of whom, Gnana rises on its own (in the mind of the disciple), is alone all wealth. Hence one should worship Guru.” (1:43)

ज्ञानं विना मुक्तिपदं लभ्यते गुरु-भक्तितः ।

गुरो: समानतो नान्यत्-साधनं गुरु-मार्गिणाम् ॥ (१:८९)

“Through devotion to Guru the state of Liberation can be attained even without Gnana. For those on the path of devotion to Guru, there is no means equal to Guru.” (1:89)

ब्रह्मानन्दं परम-सुखदं केवलं ज्ञान-मूर्तिं द्वन्द्वातीतं गगन-सदृशं तत्वं-अस्यादि-लक्ष्यम् ।

एकं नित्यं विमलं-अचलं सर्वधी-साक्षि-भूतं भावातीतं त्रिगुण-रहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ॥ (२:३)

“I prostrate to Sadguru, who is Bliss of Brahman incarnate, who bestows the highest bliss, whose form is just Gnana, who is beyond pairs of opposites, who is like sky (pure and all-pervasive), who is the goal of Mahavakyas like ‘Tat tvam asi’ (That thou art), who is unique, eternal, stainless, firm, who is witness of the intellects of all, who is beyond mental formulations and who is free from the three attributes (Satva, Rajas and Tamas).” (2:3)

ज्ञेयं सर्वं प्रतीतं च ज्ञानं च मन उच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं समं कुर्यान्-नान्यः पन्था द्वितीयकः ॥ (२:१९)

“All perceived objects are to be known (as Brahman); mind is the knowledge. Knowledge and that which is to be known should be equated; there is no other way. (2:19)

ज्ञानं वैराग्यं-ऐश्वर्यं यशः श्रीस्वं-उदाहृतम् ।

षड्गुण्-ऐश्वर्य-युक्तश्च भगवान् श्रीगुरुः प्रिये ॥ (२:६०)

“Beloved! Sri Guru is Bhagavan, who possesses the six lordly bhagas (glories): Gnana, dispassion, lordship, fame, wealth and power. (2:60)

गूढो दृढश्च प्रीतश्च मौनेन सुसमाहितः ।

सकृत्-काम-गतो वापि पंचधा गुरुरीरितः ॥ (२:८७)

“Guru is said to be of five types: secretive, firm, loving, well-established in silence, appearing on his own (to bless the disciple) even once.” (2:87)

लौकिकाद्-धर्मतो याति ज्ञान-हीनो भवार्णवे ।

ज्ञान-भावे च यत्-सर्वं कर्म निष्कर्म शाम्यति ॥ (२:९२)

“One, who is devoid of Gnana, enters into the ocean of births by doing worldly activities. All karma performed with Gnana leads to the peace of actionlessness.” (2:92)

गुरवो निर्मलाः शान्ताः साधवो मितभाषिणः ।

काम-क्रोध-विनिर्मुक्ताः सदाचारा जितेन्द्रियाः ॥ (३:३६)

“Gurus are free from all impurities, full of peace, virtuous, economical in speech, totally free from desire and anger, of upright conduct and have sense organs under control.” (3:36)

सप्त-कोटि-महामन्त्राश्-चित्त-विभ्रंश-कारकाः ।

एक एव महामन्त्रो गुरुरित्य्-अक्षर-द्वयम् ॥ (३:६३)

“The seven crores of Mahamantras act to delude the mind. This two-lettered mantra ‘Guru’ is the only Mahamantra.” (3:63)

We may recall in this context what Adi Sankaracharya had to say about the greatness of Guru in his very first verse in the Vedantic text ‘Satasloki’.

दृष्टान्तो नैव दृष्टः त्रिभुवन-जठरे सद्गुरोर्-ज्ञान-दातुः

स्पर्शश्चेत्-तत्र कल्प्यः स नयति यदहो स्वर्णतां अश्मसारम् ।

न स्पर्शत्वं तथापि श्रित-चरण-युगे सद्गुरुः स्वीय-शिष्ये

स्वीयं साम्यं विधत्ते भवति निरुपमस्-तेन वाऽलौकिकोऽपि ॥ (१)

“There is nothing in all the three worlds that can be compared to the Sadguru, who imparts Gnana. The philosopher’s stone may be considered for comparison, as it transforms a piece of iron into gold (in the same way in which Guru transforms an ordinary disciple into Gnani). But this comparison is not apt because while the Sadguru bestows equality with himself on his disciple, who has taken refuge in his twin feet (the disciple turns into Sadguru himself), the philosopher’s stone cannot render a piece of iron into another philosopher’s stone. Hence Sadguru is beyond comparison and out-of -the-world in glory.”

Devotion of Disciple

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्-यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।

तस्यैते कथिताह्य्-अर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ (१:८)

“To that great soul, who has the greatest devotion to Iswara and has the same level of devotion to Guru, the import of all my teachings will be revealed.” (1:8)

This is also the last mantra of Svetasvatara Upanishad.

यो गुरुः स शिवः प्रोक्तो यः शिवः स गुरुः स्मृतः ।

विकल्पं यस्तु कुर्वीत स नरो गुरु-तल्पगः ॥ (१:९)

"The one who is Guru is indeed Siva; the one who is Siva is indeed Guru. One who makes distinction between these two is like the violator of Guru's wife." (1:9)

जपस्-तपो व्रतं तीर्थं यज्ञो दानं तथैव च ।

गुरु-तत्वं-अविज्ञाय सर्वं व्यर्थं भवेत् प्रिये ॥ (१:१३)

"Beloved! Japa (chanting of mantra), tapas (penance), vrata (ceremonial vow), tirtha (pilgrimage to holy places), yagna, danam (ceremonial gift) etc. are all useless without comprehending the principle of Guru." (1:13)

गुरु-पादोदकं पानं गुरोर्-उच्छिष्ट- भोजनम् ।

गुरु-मूर्तेः सदा ध्यानं गुरोर्-नाम सदा जपः ॥ (१:२१)

"One should drink the water washed off the feet of Guru, eat the remnants of Guru's food, meditate always on the form of Guru and chant always the name of Guru." (1:21)

काशीक्षेत्रं निवासश्च जाह्नवी चरणोदकम् ।

गुरुर्-विश्वेश्वरः साक्षात्-तारकं ब्रह्म निश्चयः ॥ (१:२५)

"The place where Guru lives is the holy Kashi; the water washed off his feet is Ganga; Guru is none other than Visveswara himself; he is certainly the Brahman, who enables one to cross the Samsara." (1:25)

गुरुदेवार्पणं वस्तु तेन तुष्टोऽस्मि सुव्रते ।

श्रीगुरोः पादुकां मुद्रां मूलमन्त्रं च गोपयेत् ॥ (२:८९)

"Woman of good resolve! I am pleased with anything offered with devotion to Gurudeva. One should maintain Sri Guru's sandals, mudra and moolamantra with secrecy." (2:89)

गुरु-कार्यं न लंघेत नापृष्ट्वा कार्यं-आचरेत् ।

न ह्युत्तिष्ठेद्-दिशे अनध्वा गुरु-सद्भाव-शोभितः ॥ (२:२६)

"One should not transgress the instructions of Guru; he should not act without Guru's approval. He should not proceed in a direction or path not lighted by Guru's approval." (2:26)

न गुरोर्-आश्रमे कुर्याद्-दुष्पानं परिसर्पणम् ।

दीक्षा व्याख्या प्रभुत्वादि गुरोर्-आज्ञां न कारयेत् ॥ (२:२७)

"In Guru's ashram one should not indulge in drinking prohibited drinks, unnecessary roaming around and activities normally undertaken by Guru himself, like giving diksha, explanatory discourse, ordering others etc." (2:27)

गुरूणां सद्-असद्वापि यदुक्तं न लंघयेत् ।

कुर्वन्न्-आज्ञां दिवा-रात्रौ दासवन्-निवसेद्-गुरौ ॥ (२:२९)

"One should not transgress the verbal instructions of Gurus, whether they appear good or bad. One should live with Guru like a slave, acting on his orders day and night." (2:29)

गच्छतः पृष्ठतो गच्छेद्-गुरुच्-छायां न लंघयेत् ।

नोल्बणं धारयेद्-वेषं नालंकारांस्-तदोल्बणान् ॥ (२:३२)

"One should walk behind the Guru; he should not cross the shadow of Guru. He should not wear glossy dress, or glossy decorations." (2:32)

गुरु-निन्दा-करं दृष्ट्वा धावयेद्-अथ वासयेत् ।

स्थानं वा तत्-परित्याज्यं जिह्वाच्-छेदाक्षमो यदि ॥ (२:३३)

"On seeing a person who slanders the Guru, one should run away from that place. If he is capable of cutting off the tongue of the slanderer, he can stay there; if not he should leave that place hastily." (2:33)

मन्द-भाग्याह्य्-अशक्ताश्च ये जना नानुमन्यते ।

गुरुसेवासु विमुखाः पच्यन्ते नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ (३:२६)

"Those unfortunate and incapable persons, who do not believe in Guru and turn away from service of Guru, are roasted in impure hell." (3:26)

गुरवो बहवः सन्ति शिष्य-वित्ता-पहारकाः ।

तमेकं दुर्लभं मन्ये शिष्य-हृत्-ताप-हारकम् ॥ (३:३४)

"There are many Gurus, who knock off the wealth of disciples. I am of the opinion that that Guru, who removes the misery in the heart of the disciple, is unique and rare indeed." (3:34)

गुरु-त्यागाद्-भवेन्-मृत्युर्-मन्त्र-त्यागाद्-दरिद्रता ।

गुरु-मन्त्र-परित्यागी रौरवं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥ (३:६०)

"Desertion of Guru will lead to death; desertion of mantra (taught by Guru), to poverty. One who deserts both Guru and the mantra will fall into the hell of Rourava." (3:60)

शिव-क्रोधाद्-गुरुस्-त्राता गुरुक्रोधाच्-छिवो न हि ।

तस्मात्-सर्व-प्रयत्नेन गुरोर्-आज्ञां न लंघयेत् ॥ (३:६१)

"Guru can protect the disciple from the wrath of Siva; Siva will not protect him from the wrath of Guru. Hence one should make all efforts to avoid transgression of Guru's orders." (3:61)

Diksha and Japa

दुस्संगं च परित्यज्य पापकर्म परित्यजेत् ।

चित्त-चिह्नं-इदं यस्य तस्य दीक्षा विधीयते ॥ (३:३८)

"Diksha (initiation of disciple by Guru in mantra) is prescribed for one, whose mind bears the impress of having abandoned association with evil and sinful actions." (3:38)

चित्त-त्याग-नियुक्तश्च क्रोध-गर्व-विवर्जितः ।

द्वैत-भाव-परित्यागी तस्य दीक्षा विधीयते ॥ (३:३९)

"Diksha is prescribed for one, whose mind has abandoned the above, is free from anger and ego and has discarded dualism." (3:39)

पवित्रे निर्मले देशे नित्या-नुष्ठानतोऽपि वा ।

निर्वेदनेन मौनेन जपं-एतत् समारभेत् ॥ (३:३)

"Japa (chanting) of this (Guru Gita or mantra) should be commenced after completing prescribed daily karmas (Nitya Anushthana) and sitting in a pure and clean place, with mental peace and silence." (3:3)

जाप्येन जयं-आप्नोति जप-सिद्धिं फलं तथा ।

हीनं कर्म त्यजेत् सर्वं गर्हित-स्थानमेव च ॥ (३:४)

"Through Japa one attains victory, efficaciousness of mantra and desired fruit. One should discard all despicable deeds and contemptible places." (3:4)

कृष्णाजिने ध्यान-सिद्धिर्-मोक्षश्रीर्-व्याघ्र-चर्मणि ।

कुशासने ज्ञान-सिद्धिः सर्व-सिद्धिस्तु कम्बले ॥ (२:१०३)

"Sitting on seat of skin of black antelope for japa will enable meditation; seat of tiger skin, glory of Liberation; seat of darbha grass, attainment of Gnana; and, seat of wool, all attainments." (2:103)

Siva's Reverence of Guru

As has already been seen in the excerpts quoted above, Siva consistently pays his own homage to Guru as a lesson for us to learn. Some more verses are given below.

यद्-अंघ्रि-कमल-द्वन्द्वं द्वन्द्व-ताप-निवारकम् ।

तारकं भव-सिंधोश्च श्रीगुरुं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥ (१:१६)

"I prostrate to Sri Guru, whose twin lotus feet remove the misery born of pairs of opposites and enable one to cross the ocean of samsara." (1:16)

श्रीगुरुं परमानन्दं वन्दे आनन्द-विग्रहम् ।

यस्य सन्निधि-मात्रेण चिद्-आनन्दायते मनः ॥ (३:५२)

"I worship Sri Guru, who is Supreme Bliss incarnate, whose form is only bliss and just in whose presence one's mind becomes conscious bliss." (3:52)

यस्य प्रसादाद्-अहमेव सर्वं मय्येव सर्वं परिकल्पितं च ।

इत्थं विजानामि सद्-आत्म-रूपं तस्यांघ्रि-पद्मं प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम् ॥ (३:६४)

"I always worship at the lotus feet of that Sri Guru, by whose grace I realize my eternal Self, perceiving that I am everything and that everything is indeed superimposed on me." (3:64)

Guru Gita Mahima

अनन्त-फलं-आप्नोति गुरुगीता-जपेन तु ।

सर्वपाप-हरा देवि सर्वदारिद्र्य-नाशिनी ॥ (२:९६)

"Devi! By chanting Guru Gita, one reaps infinite benefits. This removes all sins and destroys all poverty." (2:96)

अकाल-मृत्यु-हरा चैव सर्वसंकट-नाशिनी ।

यक्ष-राक्षस-भूतादि-चोर-व्याघ्र-विघातिनी ॥ (२:९७)

"This Guru Gita prevents untimely death, removes all obstacles and the fear of Yakshas, Rakshasas, bhutas, robbers, tiger etc." (2:97)

सर्वो-पद्रव-कुष्टादि-दुष्टदोष-निवारिणी ।

यत्फलं गुरु-सान्निध्यात्-तत्फलं पठनाद्-भवेत् ।। (२:९८)

"This Guru Gita relieves of all miseries like leprosy etc. and cruel sins. By reading Guru Gita one reaps the same benefit which is obtained in Guru's immediate presence." (2:98)

सत्यं सत्यं पुनः सत्यं धर्म-सांख्यं मयोदितम् ।

गुरुगीता-समं स्तोत्रं नास्ति तत्वं गुरोः परम् ॥ (३:२१)

“There is no stotram equal to Guru Gita; there is no principle higher than Guru. This is truth, truth and truth again. What I have said is the ultimate principle of dharma.” (3:21)

ॐ तत् सत्

A Brief on Ishaavaasyopanishat

By Major V Ramanujam

1. Of the six systems of Indian Orthodox Philosophy, Vaisheshikam of Sage Kanada, Nyaaya of Sage Gauthama, Nirishwara Saankya of Sage Kapila, Sa-ishwara Saankya of Sage Patanjali, Poorva Mimaamsa of Sage Jaimini and Uttara Mimaamsa of Sage Vyaasa, the last, also known as Vedaantha, is the most popular.

2. The basis of Vedaantha is Prasthaana Traya – Upanishats, Brahma Sutra and Bhagavat Gita. Initially there were said to be over 1000 upanishats, which with the passage of time has come to around 250 today, of which some are doubtful too, being later additions possibly. However Aadhi Shankaraachaarya, the earliest commentator on Upanishats, classified and commented on 10 out of them as the Major Upanishats. Of this, he listed Ishaavaasyopanishat the first, the others being Keno, Katho, Prashno, Mundako, Maanduukyo, Taittiriyo, Aithareyo, Chaandokyo and Bruhadaaranyako – panishats. As Shankara has quoted from another 3 to 4 upanishats, these too have been recognized as ancient and authentic upanishats.

3. Ishaavaasyopanishat, also known as Ishopanishat and Samhithopanishat (as it appears in the Samhitha portion of Shukla Yajur veda, also called the Vaajasaneyi Samhitha) and contains 18 verses.

4. Maximum number of scholars has commented on Ishaavaasyopanishat; still it is baffling to the readers, because of its high philosophy, in spite of the strenuous efforts of these intellectual giants!

5. The Upanishat discusses 4 worship levels. Level 1 refers to Murthi Puja (karma kaanda). Level 2 Upaasana on Hiranyagarbha or Brahma. Level 3 Worshipping Paramaathman or Saakaara Brahman, Sriman Narayana (bhakthi kaanda). Level 4 Worshipping Bhagawaan or Niraakaara Brahman, not confined to a Form, Name, Time, Space or Place (Jnaana).

6. A very brief note on the contents of the 18 verses (verse-wise) is attempted hereunder.
I should acknowledge that I might not have done enough justice to the full meaning and intent of the verse, here! More light will be thrown by a Guru, when learnt in person.

i) God is Proprietor: (This addresses Jnaana Nishtaa devotees, those who struggle for the attainment of knowledge of Brahman. This is Nivrutthi Maarga or the path of Renunciation.) Everything in this world belongs to and is

permeated by The Lord. Enjoy it with detachment. Do not be greedy to possess others' wealth.

ii) Perform detached Karma: (This addresses Karma Nishtaa devotees, those who are unable to take up Sannyaasa. This is Pravrutthi Maarga or the path of Action.) Aspire to live a full life of 100 years, spending that life for the welfare of others. Spent that way, Karma will not attach to you.

iii) Karma earned: (This addresses Aathmahanaas or slayers of their own souls.) If life is not spent as advised above, such persons will have to suffer in the dark hellish worlds, as they work against spiritual upliftment of their own Selves!

iv) Omnipresence of God: Although fixed in His heavenly abode, he is omnipresent. Senses can't reach him. He controls everything. He surpasses everyone in excellence.

v) Omnipotency of God: God has inconceivable, limitless potencies. He is omnipotent. Nothing is impossible for him. He is near and far, can walk and not walk and he is inside everything and outside everything. None can limit what he can do. (You understand him as per your spiritual level.)

vi) The Self-realised Person hates none: He who sees Aathman in everything and everything as a part and parcel of the Lord, never hates any.

vii) The Self-realised Person has no delusion or grief: One becomes a true knower of things, when he looks at all as Divine Sparks. Where is the question of his being deluded or in sorrow, when he sees the unity of Jiva with Brahman?

viii) Omniscience of God: The Self-realised Person knows the Greatest of all as non-embodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without gross body parts like veins, pure, uncontaminated, self sufficient philosopher, who has, for time immemorial, been fulfilling the wishes of devotees.

ix) Vidhya and Avidhya pursuers reach Andham Tamah: (From here to shloka 14, interpretations of commentators differ, because of obscurity of the verses. We shall first discuss shlokaas (ix) to (xi) in one block): Avidhya refers to mundane knowledge – material sciences and Karma Kaanda part of Vedaas (vedic rituals). Vidhya refers to Upaasana Kaanda and an exposure to the Theory of Upanishats. Pursuers of both end up in what is called here as "Andham Tamah" ie., darkest binding regions of ignorance. To explain "Andham Tamah"; Pursuers of Avidhya, called Veda- rathaah, seek sense – satisfaction and therefore reach upto Pitru lokaa and return. Pursuers of Vidhya are Jnaanis, but not Yogis and they satisfy the Gods and thereby reach upto heaven and return. Since the impressions of their past births are very strong, in their next births also, they seek and go to Pitru loka / heaven and keep returning. Thus both miss the royal path that leads to mukthi or freedom from trans-migratory existence. This spiritual strategy is called "Andham Tamah".

x) Destinations of both pursuers are different: The wise hold that one result is achieved by pursuing Avidhya and another by pursuing Vidhya; but both are Andham Tamah, domains of Ignorance only.

xi) Balanced approach leads to immortality: Those who follow mundane as well as Upaasana vidhyaas and balance them with vedaanthic knowledge, cross the cycle of Birth and Death and become immortal, by virtue of their observing laid down duties and conducting themselves in god-ward path, shown by Vedaantha.

xii) Sambhuthi and Asambhuthi worshippers reach Andham Tamah (We shall now discuss shlokaas (xii) to(xiv) in one block): Interpretations are still more intriguing here!

(a) Shankara interprets Sambhuthi as all gods upto Kaarya Brahma or Hiranyagarbha (totality of creation) and Asambhuthi as Kaarana Brahma (Prakruthi or Avyakrutha) or the subtle Causal State before creation (when everything was still before Hiranyagarbha). Meditators on the former get super-natural psychic powers and sense satisfaction and on the latter reach a state of inertness free from experience of joy or sorrow; but neither attain liberation.

(b) Sambhuthi refers to Parabrahman and Asambhuthi, the body. Both, the worshipping of Parabrahman torturing body or worshipping body taking that as God, are not conducive to liberation.

(c) Some call Sambhuthi as Personal Godhead Narayana or Krishna and Asambhuthi as temporary manifestations as demi-gods or men or animals. Some hold that worshipping Sambhuthi alone leads to liberation and some say that worshipping Asambhuthi also leads to liberation. This shloka states that neither alone leads to liberation, but one has to know both. The latter is also called Vinaasha.

xiii) Destinations of both worshippers are different: The wise hold that one result is achieved by worshipping Sambhuthi and another by worshipping Asambhuthi; but both are Andham Tamah, domains of Ignorance only.

xiv) Balanced approach leads to immortality: Whatever the interpretation given above, it is only by transcending both worships, one can win over Death and reach Immortality.

xv) Death-bed Prayers: (The verses 15 to 18 are the prayers of a sadhaka in death bed to Brahman seen as the Sun.) Prayer to Sun as Brahman: In verse 15, he prays to God to remove the obstacles in his way to realize God, namely the material attractions of the world.

xvi) Prayer to Sun as Brahman: Praising God, the Saadhaka prays that he may see the glory of the Lord, for (after all) he is the same as the Purusha in the Sun!

xvii) Prayer to Brahman as Agni: Realising that his death is imminent, he prays to Agni, the presiding deity of the sacrificial (also funeral) fire to recollect that (after all) he has done some good deeds (too).

xviii) Prayer to Brahman as Agni: Aware that he is going to be consigned to funeral fire, the saadhaka offers repeated salutations and prays for the remission of his sins and to be lead towards Immortality by the Path of light or Devayaana.

7. The Peace prayer itself sums up the Universality of God and Jagat – Jiva – Brahma Unity.

Jivanmukti Viveka

A Summary
By S. N. Sastri

Chapter-1
Scriptural Authority on Jivanmukti

This work consists of five chapters, known as Prakaranas. The first chapter deals with the scriptural authority for the postulation of Jivanmukti or liberation while still living. The chapter opens with a salutation to Sri Vidyatirtha, the author's Guru, who is identified with the Supreme Lord.

Sannyasais of two kinds, known as Vividisha Sannyasa and Vidvat Sannyasa, or, renunciation of the seeker and renunciation of the knower. (These terms will become clear as we proceed further). The first is the cause of liberation after death (Videha mukti) and the second of liberation while still living in the body (Jivanmukti). The essential pre-requisite for both these kinds of Sannyasa is detachment. Detachment is of three kinds -- weak, strong and stronger. The detachment that arises on the occurrence of some calamity such as the death of a dear one, or loss of possessions, is not lasting and is categorized as weak. Such a temporary feeling of detachment is of no use and does not make a person eligible for Sannyasa. The determination not to marry, beget children and live the life of a householder is categorized as 'strong' detachment. There are four varieties of Vividisha Sannyasa. These are -- Kutichaka, Bahoodaka, Hamsa and Paramahamsa. The detachment described as 'strong' makes the person eligible only for the varieties of Sannyasa called Kutichaka and Bahoodaka. Both of them are 'Tridandins' i.e. they carry three long thin sticks knotted together, emblematic of the triple renunciation of everything connected with body, mind and speech. The Kutichaka resides in a secluded hermitage. The Bahoodaka keeps moving from one holy place to another. The choice as to which of these two varieties a person with the kind of detachment described as 'strong' should take depends on whether he is physically fit to move about from place to place or not.

When a person is free from desire not only for the pleasures of this world, but even for those of higher worlds such as heaven, because of the knowledge that they are transient and will result only in repeated births and deaths, he is said to have 'stronger' detachment. This kind of detachment entitles the person to take the Hamsa and Paramahamsa varieties of Sannyasa. A Hamsa Sannaysi goes to Brahmaloka, realizes the absolute truth there and becomes liberated. This is known as Krama mukti or liberation by stages. The Paramahamsa is the ascetic of the highest order, who has achieved complete

control over his senses. He attains liberation even while living in the body. This is called Jivanmukti.

Paramahamsas are of two kinds: the seeker after liberation and the knower of the Self. The seeker is one who has renounced all desires and wants nothing but the realization of the Self. He does not desire any of the three worlds or spheres of enjoyment, namely, the world of men, the world of the manes and the world of the gods. The means to the attainment of these three worlds are, respectively, the begetting of a son, the performance of the prescribed Vedic rituals and meditation (Br.Up.1.5.26). The seeker renounces all these means. He is intent only on attaining the world of the Self, which means liberation. To attain this he has to achieve total control over the mind, body and senses.

Vividisha Sannyasa - Renunciation of the seeker

The desire for Self-realization arises to a person as a result of the study of the Vedas and the performance of the rites enjoined by the Vedas in this life or in previous lives. The renunciation consequent on such desire is known as Vividisha Sannyasa or 'the renunciation of the seeker'. (Vividisha means 'the desire to know'). This Sannyasa is the means to the knowledge of Brahman. This is of two kinds: one, giving up the performance of only Kamya karma, or actions motivated by desire for the fruit, and two, entering the Sannyasa Ashrama by muttering the Praisha formula and accepting the staff, etc. It is said here that ladies also are entitled to this Sannyasa before marriage and after the death of the husband, but it appears that they can become only 'tridandins', that is, only the Kutichaka and Bahoodaka varieties. Those who are not able to take the Sannyasa Ashrama for some reason can renounce mentally, while continuing to perform the duties of their own Ashrama.

Vidvat Sannyasa - Renunciation of the Knower

The entry into the Sannyasa order by those who have already attained Self-realization through hearing, reflection and meditation is known as Vidvat Sannyasa. Sage Yajnavalkya is an example of this. Having already realized the highest truth he declared his intention to renounce the world to his wife Maitreyi. He then became a Sannyasin. (See Br.Up.4.5.2 and 4.5.15). This kind of Sannyasa is also mentioned in the Kahola Brahmana in Br.Up. 3.5.1.

While the Vividisha Sannyasins hould devote himself to the study of the scriptures, reflection thereon and meditation for the realization of the Self, the Vidvat Sannyasin should strive for the destruction of the mind and the elimination of Vasanas in order to attain Jivanmukti. This matter will be dealt with in detail later on.

In the Jabala upanishad, when Atri objects that giving up of the sacred thread by a Brahmana is not permissible, Yajnavalkya replies that Self-knowledge is the real sacred thread for the Paramahamsa Sannyasin (Jabala.Up.5). So the absence of the external sacred thread is the sign that the Sannyasin belongs to the Paramahamsa category. It is further said in this Upanishad that Vidvat Sannyasins are without the external signs of Ashrama, bound by no forms of conduct and behaving like mad men, though not mad.

The procedure for a Tridandin to become a Vividisha Sannyasin who carries only one stick is the following. The three sticks, water-pot, begging bowl with the suspension-strainer, tuft and sacred thread should be offered to the Bhurloka, i.e. the earth, reciting the mantra: "Bhuh Svaha", meaning, "oblation to Bhuh" and thrown into water. He should then seek the Self.

The Paramahamsa who is a Vidvat Sannyasin is described as one who is like a new-born baby, whose mind is free from the effects of the pairs of opposites, devoid of all possessions, who is firmly established in the path to Brahman, whose mind is free from desires, who, just to maintain life without being under obligation to any one, goes about begging at the prescribed time, using his belly as the begging bowl, and is unperturbed whether he gets it or not, without a fixed dwelling, lives in places such as a derelict house, a temple, a hay-stack, under a tree, in a pottery, in a house where sacrificial fire is kept, on the riverside, in a mountain cave, in the hollow of a tree, or a place for the performance of sacrifices built near a spring. He is free from all striving, devoid of the feeling of "I and mine", ever meditates on the pure Self, is established in the supreme Self, gives up all actions and ultimately gives up his body with total detachment.

Both Vividisha Sannyasa and Vidvat Sannyasa fall under the category of Paramahamsa, but their characteristics are different and, in some respects, even contradictory. In Arunika Upanishad it is said that Vividisha Sannyasa is marked by the giving up of the tuft, the sacred thread, the study of the (Karmakanda of the) Vedas, the repetition of the Gayatri, etc, and enjoins the acceptance of a staff, bathing three times a day, meditation on the Self and study of the Upanishads. Though the same are prescribed for Vidvat Sannyasa also, it is said in the Paramahamsa Upanishad that these are not the essentials. A Vidvat Sannyasin is free from all rules regarding external symbols, social norms and conventions. He ever remains established in the realization that he is Brahman.

In the Smritis also, the distinction between these two types of Sannyasa is clear. With regard to Vividisha Sannyasa, Brihaspati Smriti says that those who find worldly life to be devoid of substance enter the order of Sannyasins even before marriage. The Mahabharata says that the wise, who aim at the attainment of Self-knowledge, renounce the world (14.43.39).

Regarding Vidvat Sannyasa, it is said-"When the eternal, supreme Brahman, becomes known (in a general way), then taking only one staff, the person must give up the sacred thread and the tuft; he should renounce everything and take Sannyasa, after having directly realized the supreme Brahman".

Desire for knowledge out of mere curiosity is no ground for renunciation. Vividisha implies desire for knowledge alone, excluding everything else. It can be compared to the desire for food of a person who is so hungry that he cannot tolerate even a moment's delay and will not accept anything else, however valuable. (In his Bhashya on Gita, 4.11 Sri Sankara says that it is impossible for a person to be a seeker of liberation and also a seeker of the fruits of action at the same time. This means that Vividisha, the desire to know the Self, can be said to be there only when there is total detachment towards everything else).

The culmination of knowledge is when the identification with the Self totally replaces the identification with the body (See Upadesa Sahasri, 4.5). On the attainment of this culmination, the knot of the heart is cut off, all doubts are destroyed and all latent impressions are annihilated (Mund.Up. 2.2.8).

The highest state attainable through karma is that of Hiranyagarbha. Even this pales into insignificance compared to the Supreme Brahman. The 'knot of the heart' means the wrong identity of the Self with the intellect, caused by beginningless ignorance; it is so called because it is as tight as a knot. The doubts referred to are-- Is the Self a mere witness or the doer of actions? If it is only a witness, is it Brahman or not? If it is Brahman, can it be known by the intellect or not? Does liberation consist merely in this knowledge? The 'latent impressions' are those that lead to future births. These three, being the results of Avidya, disappear on the realization of the Self. (See also Gita, 18.17).

A doubt now arises. Since Vividisha Sannyasa itself leads to the attainment of knowledge of the Self, which itself prevents future birth, and the remaining portion of this life has to be lived because of Prarabdha karma, what is the need for Vidvat Sannyasa? The answer is -- Vidvat Sannyasa is necessary for the attainment of Jivanmukti or liberation in life. Vividisha Sannyasa leads only to the attainment of Knowledge.

The nature of Jivanmukti

Bondage is the experience of pleasure and pain resulting from man looking upon himself as the performer of actions and the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. Because of this bondage one is not able to experience the Bliss which is natural to him. The cessation of this bondage is Jivanmukti or liberation in life. Now the question arises -- is the bondage the natural characteristic of the

Witness (Self) or of the mind? Since bondage ceases on the dawn of knowledge, it cannot be a characteristic of the Self, because what is natural can never be removed, like the heat of fire or the fluidity of water. If it is the natural characteristic of the mind, then also it can never be got rid of. It may be argued that though the natural characteristic of the mind cannot be completely removed, its effect can be neutralized by the practice of yoga. To this the answer given by the objector is that Praarabdha karma will make the person experience pleasure and pain and will prevent knowledge from destroying the ignorance along with its effects in its entirety. The Siddhanti's reply to this is that the human efforts prescribed by the scriptures can counteract even the effects of Praarabdha karma. If this is not so, all the sacred texts on liberation will become useless. One should not give up further effort just because of failure once. Nobody gives up eating for fear of indigestion or cooking for fear of being pestered by beggars or covering oneself with a blanket in cold weather because of the fear that there may be lice in it.

The efficacy of the efforts prescribed by scripture is known clearly from the dialogue between Vasishtha and Rama in Yogavasishtha. Rama says -- "My Vasanas (the impressions of previous actions and thoughts) compel me to act in a particular way. I am powerless to go against them". Vasishtha replies - "Since you are subject to your Vasanas, your own initiative, combined with enthusiasm and effort by thought, word and deed is essential to liberate you from such dependence. Vasanas are of two kinds: good and bad. If the good Vasanas are powerful, they will themselves lead you to the attainment of liberation. If the evil Vasanas are powerful, you have to exert yourself to conquer them. The mind can be turned away, by the company of the good, from objects which are not conducive to spiritual progress. The mind is like a child. It can be disciplined by persuasion rather than by force. Control of breath (Pranaayaama) and withdrawal of the mind from external objects (Pratyaahaara) are the two methods of subduing the mind. By this method the mind becomes calm soon. When good desires arise soon after the practice of Rajayoga, it should be attributed to the practice of the yoga. One should continue with such practice in accordance with the instruction of the teacher, scripture and other valid evidence (Pramaana) until complete mastery over the mind is attained and the identity of Brahman and Atman is realized. After that, when the obstacles in the form of evil desires have vanished, even the good desires should be given up. It is thus clear that all desires (including those arising due to Praarabdha karma) can be got rid of through Yoga and so the possibility of Jivanmukti cannot be disputed.

Characteristics of Jivanmukti

The Srutis and Smritis establish the existence of the state of Jivanmukti. The Kathopanishad says (5.1),"the one already liberated is altogether liberated",

which means that one who has become totally free from bondage while alive is freed from all possibility of future bondage after the fall of the body. Though during Pralaya and after death everyone remains free from another birth for some time, he will certainly be born again, but one who has attained liberation in life will be freefrom birth for ever. The Br. Up. says, "When all the desires that are in his heart fall off entirely, the mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman here (in this body) itself" (4.4.7). In another Sruti it is said, "Though with eyes, he is, as it were, without eyes; though with ears, he is, as it were, without ears; though with mind, he is, as it were, without mind; and though with life, he is, as it were, without life".

The Jivanmukta is described by different names such as, Sthitaprajna (man of steady wisdom), Bhagavad-bhakta (Devotee of God), Gunaatita (beyond the three Gunas), Brahmana (who has realized theSelf), Ativarnaasramin (beyond the pale of the four Varnas and the four Asramas).

Jivanmukti can be attained only by a person who has given up all other actions, both Vedic and secular, who is in pursuit of knowledge alone and who is ever immersed in contemplation on the Self. Jivanmukti and Videhamukti are distinguished only by the presence and absence of the body and the sense-organs. The awareness of duality is absent in both of them. The Jivanmukta is one for whom this phenomenal world, in which he moves and acts, has ceased to exist. In the case of an ordinary person, his mind reacts to the various forms in the world and gives him knowledge of their variety and their differences from one another. But the mind of the Jivanmukta does not get so transformed and so he does not see differences, but sees all forms only as Brahman. In deep sleep the mind does not undergo any transformation, but the seed for transformation remains. So sleep cannot be equated with the state of Jivanmukti. The Jivanmukta remains unaffected by both pleasure and pain. He is not elated by something good happening, nor is he depressed when a calamity occurs. He does not crave for anything, but subsists on whatever comes of its own accord. Though his senses function and can experience everything, his mind is absolutely calm and does not react to anything. Though his eyes see everything before him, his mind does not judge them as good or bad, favourable or unfavourable and so he is free from agitation and attachment or aversion. The senses themselves do not cause any harm. It is the mind which judges what is experienced by the senses and develops likes and dislikes in the case of an ordinary person. Since the mind of the Jivanmukta does not make any such judgment, he is free from all attachment and aversion. Because of the absence of transformation of the mind, the Jivanmukta is free from Vasanas. His mind always remains pure. He never looks upon himself as a doer of actions since he does not identify himself with the body-mind complex which alone performs all actions. Consequently he is neither elated nor depressed by the good or bad results of the actions. Others do not have any reason to fear him,

because he never insults or harms others in any way. He is also not afraid of any one. He remains unaffected even if some wicked man insults or harasses him. He does not distinguish people as friend or foe. Though full of learning, he never exhibits it. His mind is absolutely free from worldly thoughts and is always fixed on contemplation of the Self. He remains cool even in matters concerning himself, just as a man attending a marriage or other ceremony in another's house remains unaffected by the gain or loss of that other person. This coolness is due not only to his freedom from worry, but also to his awareness of the fullness of his own Self. These are the characteristics of the Jivanmukta.

Videhamukti

When the body of the Jivanmukta falls, he becomes a Videhamukta, freed from his empirical existence and attains his real nature, like air resuming its tranquillity when the wind stops blowing. His subtle body is dissolved here itself. He cannot be described as 'sat', that is to say, he cannot be called 'praajna' conditioned by avidya or 'Isvara' conditioned by maayaa. He cannot be called 'asat', or made up of mere matter. He does not experience the gross objects of sense. He is neither Virat, nor Hiranyagarbha nor Isvara. Nor is he Visva, Taijasa or Praajna. Thus he does not come under the category of microcosm (vyashti) or of macrocosm (samashti).

Sthitaprajna

The man of steady wisdom (sthitaprajna) is described in the Gita as one who has acquired supreme detachment and gained complete mastery over his mind through the practice of yoga. His mind is always fixed in the Truth. When he is in Samadhi, he is absolutely free from all desires, as his mind is incapable of transformations in that state. The satisfaction he feels is reflected in the cheerfulness of his countenance. This satisfaction is the result of realization of the Self. In Samprajnata Samadhi there is the distinction of meditator, object of meditation and the act of meditation (known as Triputi). In the Samadhi which is spoken of here, which is called Asamprajnata Samadhi, these distinctions cease. The contentment in this state is not due to the transformation of the mind, but to the impression left by such transformation in the earlier state of Samprajnata Samadhi. When such a person is out of Samadhi, he is free from anxiety and pains, is indifferent to pleasures and is free from passion, fear and anger. Such a sage may, when he has come out of Samadhi, have mental transformations and experience of pleasure and pain brought about by Praarabdha karma. But he does not feel any anxiety or craving because of them, since he has attained total discrimination and detachment. Similarly passion, fear and anger, which are products of Tamo guna, have no place in his mind. He has no attachment to any person or thing nor has he any likes or dislikes, these being caused by Tamo guna, which is

absent in him. As a tortoise draws in all its limbs, he withdraws his senses from their objects. The mind of the Sthitaprajna, when he is out of Samadhi, is entirely free from the grosser (Tamasic) kinds of transformation. When he is in Samadhi, his mind is subject to no transformation whatsoever.

The actual enjoyment of sense objects can be given up by a person by avoiding them, but the desire for them would still remain. This desire will go only when the Self is realized. A realized person does not need any external objects for getting happiness, he being Bliss itself. The Br. Up. says," What shall we achieve through children, we who have attained this Self" (4.4.2).

The constant practice of meditation on the Self is necessary to safeguard against inadvertently slipping down from the spiritual level reached, even for a person who has brought all his senses under control.

How a person may slip down is described in Gita, 2.62 & 63. When a man keeps on thinking of sense-objects, he develops attachment to them. Attachment leads to intense longing for the objects. If the longing is not fulfilled, anger arises. Anger leads to loss of the power of discrimination between what is right and what is wrong. This results in his giving up the practice of pondering over the Truth. This makes him unfit for liberation because of the current of opposite ideas which act as obstacles. But a man who has controlled his mind and is free from attachment and aversion even when he is in the midst of sense-objects, attains peace.

The means for the attainment of realization, such as control of the mind and senses and meditation on the Self have to be deliberately practiced by the aspirant for liberation, but these become the intrinsic characteristics of the realized person. The condition of being firmly established in the knowledge of the Self, wherein all sense of separateness is obliterated by the uninterrupted flow of the light of the Self, is called Jivanmukti or liberation in life.
Bhagavadbhaktah -The True Devotee of God

He is described in Gita, ch.12, verses 13 & 14. In Samadhi the devotee's mind is fixed on God and so it is not distracted by any other thought. When out of Samadhi, though he experiences objects, he feels neither joy nor sorrow, he being indifferent to both. Verses 15 to 19of the same chapter describe him as unaffected by all the pairs of opposites. In Naishkarmya siddhi, 4.69 Suresvaracharya says that the good qualities such as absence of hatred manifest of their own accord and are not the result of any effort by him. They are natural to him and do not constitute the means to an end as in the case of those who are still in the stage of aspirants.

Gunaatita- one who has transcended the Gunas

Such a person is described in chapter 14 of the Bhagavad-gita. The whole world is made up of the products of the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. One who transcends these Gunas is a Jivanmukta. Illumination, activity and delusion are the result of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. They are active in the waking and dream states, but subside in sleep, Samadhi and absent-mindedness. Activity is of two kinds, agreeable and disagreeable. The unenlightened man hates the disagreeable and longs for the agreeable. The Gunaatita, being free from the notions of 'agreeable' and 'disagreeable', feels neither hatred nor desire. The discriminating Gunaatita remains entirely indifferent, like a disinterested onlooker witnessing two parties fighting with each other. This is because of his conviction that the Gunas in the form of the senses act and react upon the same Gunas in the form of objects and he, as the pure Atma, has nothing to do with them. The wrong notion that one is the doer of actions (and consequently the enjoyer of the results) is the cause of mental agitation. This is totally absent in the Gunaatita and so he is ever free from agitation. He is balanced in pleasure and pain. Service to the Supreme Being by the practice of knowledge and meditation accompanied by unswerving devotion are the means to be adopted by a person who wants to become a Gunaatita.

Braahmanah- the knower of Brahman

The word Braahmana denotes the knower of the supreme Self. He is entitled to become a Vidvat Sannyasin. He is devoid of all possessions. He is not concerned about the kind of garment he wears or the food he eats or the place where he rests. He accepts only the bare minimum of food, clothing and shelter necessary for bodily sustenance. He should wear only a loin cloth and carry a staff for the purpose of instilling faith in his listeners while engaged, purely out of his grace, in imparting the knowledge of Brahman to them. He should never, in spite of his sympathy for others, utter even a word about the worldly concerns of his pupils, but should always remain absorbed in meditation. He should avoid all talk other than about Brahman. Meditation is unimpeded when one is alone. The Smriti says that the religious mendicant should remain alone, because if there are two or more there is a possibility of talk among themselves on subjects such as politics or about the alms received by each. He should not give any blessing to any one because that will create distractions in his mind because of thoughts about what each person wants to have. Another Smriti says that knowledge can never be attained by one whose mind is concerned with the things of the world or with mere bookish learning or the preservation of one's body. The liberated man must give up all these. In lieu of words of blessing he should merely utter the word 'Narayana' which serves the purpose of all blessings. He should not engage himself in any effort to gain anything either for himself or for others. It is said In the Gita,18.48 that all undertakings are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. Salutation is prescribed only for Vividisha Sannyasins thus - "A senior

monk should be saluted if he belongs to the same order of monks, but never any one else". Enquiry about the relative seniority of monks and whether they belong to the same order leads to distraction of the mind and so salutation is not prescribed for Vidvat Sannyasins. Sri Sankarasays in Upadesa Sahasri, 17.64- "Whom should a knower of the Self salute, when he is established in the infinite, non-dual Self which transcends all names and forms? He has nothing to do with action of any kind". Although salutation of the kind likely to cause disturbance of the mind is prohibited, that salutation which brings about tranquility of mind is permitted. Srimad Bhagavata, 3.29.34 & 11.29.16say -- "One should salute, prostrating oneself even before a dog, a Chandala, a cow and an ass, realizing that God is present in them all in the form of the Jiva". Praise of men is forbidden, but praise of God is enjoined, because it will lead to freedom from bondage. He who is steadfast in the knowledge of the Self should not become dejected when he does not get any food, nor should he be overjoyed when he gets it, because both are governed by destiny. He is not bound by the injunctions or prohibitions of the Vedas. Sage Narada has said in Narada-pancha-ratra, 4.2.23 that the all-pervading Lord Vishnu should be treasured up in memory and not forgotten even for a moment; all injunctions and prohibitions are subservient to this. Mahabharata, Santiparva, 237.13 says that the gods consider him to be a Braahmana who is afraid of a crowd as of a snake, of conventional honour as of death and of woman as of a corpse. This is because the company of others may lead to futile talk and honour leads to attachment which sets up tendencies adverse to the true aim of life. The Yogi, keeping in mind the path of the wise, must conduct himself in such a way that people treat him with contempt and never seek his company. Manu smriti says that one should avoid sitting close to even one's own mother, sister or daughter because the powerful sense organs can drag down even a man of wisdom (2.215).

Men of the world should avoid being alone as that may cause fear, but the opposite is applicable to Yogis. To the Yogi the vast expanse of space appears to be full of the supreme bliss of the Self since he is always absorbed in meditation and so there is no cause for fear. A crowded place is unsuitable for meditation and so the Yogi should avoid it and seek solitude.

Ativarnaasramin - One who is beyond the pale of the four Varnas and Ashramas

The Ati varna asramin is described in the fifth chapter of the section on liberation in the Suta Samhita. He is the teacher of disciples belonging to all the four Ashramas. He never becomes the disciple of anyone else. He is the Teacher of teachers. There is none in the world equal or superior to him. He is one who has realized the supreme Truth. He is all Bliss and is the witness of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. He has attained the firm conviction that Varna and Ashrama are imaginary super-impositions on the

body, brought about by Maayaa and that he, being the pure Atma, has no connection with them. He knows from the Upanishads that the whole universe functions in the mere presence of the Atma which is identical with himself, just as human beings perform all their activities with the help of the light of the sun, while the sun itself is not at all involved in their activities. Just as various ornaments made of gold are nothing but gold, the universe of multifarious names and forms projected by Maayaa is nothing but Brahman. The appearance of Brahman as the universe is similar to the appearance of nacre as silver. The great Lord who is one, devoid of any relation, is like the all-pervading space, pervading all beings, big or small, high or low. He has realized that the world of the waking state is a fabrication of Maayaa, just as all objects seen in dream are the creation of delusion. Having realized that he is the Self, he is beyond all the duties enjoined for the four Ashramas.

Thus it is conclusively established in the Srutis that Jivanmukti is a reality.

Chapter-2
On the obliteration of latent impressions (Vaasanaas)

The means to Jivanmukti are knowledge of the Reality, the dissolution of the mind and the obliteration of latent impressions. All these three have to be practiced simultaneously to get the result. It is only by prolonged practice of these three that the knot of the heart can be cut. The world appears to us to be real because of having been experienced in innumerable past births. Only the prolonged practice of yoga can remove the wrong notions cultivated over numerous lives. The knowledge of the Reality, the dissolution of the mind and the elimination of vaasanaas are related mutually as cause and effect. Until the mind is dissolved, elimination of vaasanaas is not possible and until the vaasanaas are eliminated, dissolution of the mind cannot take place. The mind undergoes modifications in consonance with the objects experienced by it through the sense organs. The 'dissolution of the mind' means the mind becoming free from such modifications and remaining controlled. vaasanaa is the cause of mental modifications, such as anger, rising up all of a sudden and without any thought of past happenings or future consequences. The effacement of vaasanaas means the elimination of the scope for the rise of anger and the like, even when causes for such anger and the like exist. This is achieved by discrimination which brings about pure vaasanas such as control of the senses and the mind. If the mind is not dissolved, it will continue to react to external stimuli and emotions such as anger will arise and then there can be no effacement of vaasanaas. So also, as long as vaasanaas exist, transformation of the mind in the form of anger, etc, continues and there can be no dissolution of the mind. The two are thus related mutually as cause and effect.

The knowledge of the Reality and the dissolution of the mind are also mutually related as cause and effect. 'Knowledge of the Reality' means the conviction to the effect, "All this is verily the Atman. The phenomenal world of forms, tastes and the like is illusory, it has no real existence". As long as such a conviction has not been attained, forms, tastes and the like will continue to be looked upon as real and the mind will continue to undergo corresponding modifications. And as long as such mental modifications continue, the conviction that Brahman alone is real will not take root.

The reciprocal causal relationship between the obliteration of latent desires (vaasanaa-kshaya) and knowledge of the Reality can also be established. Knowledge of the Reality will not arise until the mind becomes free from anger and the like, which are caused by the vaasanaas. Conversely, the elimination of vaasanaas is not possible as long as false knowledge, which invests the causes of anger and other emotions with a semblance of reality, is not removed.

When one sees everything as Brahman there can be no reason for anger, fear and other such emotions. Virtues such as self-control are strengthened by the knowledge of the Reality and the knowledge of the Reality is strengthened by such virtues. Thus all the three, knowledge of the Reality, obliteration of latent impressions and the dissolution of the mind help one another to progress further. The means of accomplishing these three are personal effort accompanied by discrimination, and giving up all desire for enjoyment. Personal effort involves the determination to succeed in the effort. Discrimination means the conviction that sravana, manana and nididhyaasana are the means to the attainment of knowledge, that yoga is the means to the dissolution of the mind and that the setting up of an opposite current of vaasanaas is the means to the obliteration of impure vaasanaas. The desire for enjoyment has to be totally eliminated because once the smallest desire arises, it will grow and become stronger and stronger if left unchecked.

It has been shown before that knowledge of the Reality (Brahman) is the result of vividishaa sannyaasaa and Jivanmukti that of vidvat sannyaasaa. That means that, after having first acquired knowledge of the Reality, one should become a vidvat sannyaasi and strive for obliteration of vaasanaas and dissolution of the mind. Since he has already acquired knowledge, a doubt may arise as to why it is said that even at this stage such a person should continue to strive for all the three, namely, attainment of knowledge, obliteration of vaasanaas and dissolution of the mind. The answer is that while, for the vividisha sannyaasi, knowledge is the principal aim and the other two are subordinate thereto, for the vidvat sannyaasi the reverse is true. Though the vidvat sannyaasi no more needs sravana, etc, having already acquired knowledge, he should constantly remember the sublime truth. This

is done by always thinking about the Reality, talking about it to others and meditating on it. In the episode of Lila in Laghu yoga vaasishtha it has been said, "Reflecting on 'That', speaking about 'That', instructing one another about 'That', this is considered by the wise to be single-minded dedication and the practice of the knowledge.

When attachment and aversion are reduced to the minimum as a result of the realization of the unreality of the objective world there arises a new sense of happiness. This is called 'Brahma-abhyaasa' or the practice of Brahman. This is the means of effacing the latent impressions.

To one seeking liberation, the aims are Jivanmukti and Videhamukti. Katha Up. 2.2.1 says - " Having been liberated from ignorance while still alive, he is altogether liberated on the fall of the body". One who has divine qualities attains liberation, while one with demoniac qualities remains in bondage, as said in Gita, Ch.16. These qualities are described in the same chapter. When the evil vaasanaas inherent in a person from birth are eliminated by the cultivation of good vaasanaas through personal effort, there results Jivanmukti.

The dissolution of the mind is also mentioned in the sruti as the cause of Jivanmukti, along with the obliteration of latent impressions. Amritabindu Up. says that the mind alone is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation. A mind attached to objects of sense causes bondage and when free from attachment the very same mind is the cause of liberation. The seeker after liberation should therefore keep his mind free from attachment. The mind, devoid of attachment to sense objects, becomes free from all modifications and comes to rest in the heart. The mind should be prevented from attaining modifications (caused by desires, likes, dislikes, anger, and the like) till its dissolution in the heart. This is knowledge and also liberation.

Bondage is of two kinds: strong and moderate. Demoniac qualities, being the direct cause of misery, make up the strong kind. The mere perception of duality, not being by itself the cause of misery, is the bondage of the moderate kind. By the obliteration of latent impressions the bondage of the strong kind alone is removed, while both kinds are removed by the dissolution of the mind. It should however not be thought that the dissolution of the mind alone is sufficient since it removes both kinds of bondage. When the powerful praarabdha karma, which is the cause of happiness and misery, brings the mind into action, then the effacement of the latent impressions is necessary to remove the first kind of bondage. All the mental transformations caused by tamoguna are to be considered as strong bondage. Transformations caused by sattva and rajoguna constitute moderate bondage.

It should not be thought that, since the moderate kind of bondage (which is the mere perception of duality) is inevitable, and the strong kind can be removed by the obliteration of latent impressions, the dissolution of the mind serves no purpose. The inevitable experience of happiness and misery, caused by a weak praarabdha, can be counteracted only by the dissolution of the mind and so this is also necessary. It has been said (Panchadasi,7.156), " If it were at all possible to prevent the experience of happiness and misery, then, Nala, Rama and Yudhishthira would never have been stricken with misery". Thus the obliteration of latent impressions and the dissolution of the mind are the direct means to Jivanmukti, and knowledge of the Reality is subordinate, being only a mediate cause, as producing the other two.

To sum up, obliteration of latent impressions and dissolution of the mind are the principal causes of Jivanmukti, while knowledge is the principal cause of Videhamukti.

A person who, without making efforts to attain knowledge of Nirguna Brahman (by sravana, etc), practices, to the extent possible, the effacement of latent impressions and dissolution of the mind and devotes himself only to Brahman with attributes (saguna), cannot attain Kaivalya, because his subtle body is not destroyed. By Kaivalya, brought about by knowledge (of Nirguna Brahman), the person is freed from bondage.

Bondage is of various kinds, signified by the expressions-- knot of ignorance, the conviction of being not Brahman, the knot of the heart, doubt, karma, hankering after objects of sense, death, rebirth and the like. All these are removed by knowledge. See Mundaka up. 2.1.10, 3.2.9, 2.2.8, Taitt.up.2.1, Sveta.up. 3.8, Katha up. 1.3.8, Br.up. 1.4.10, Br. Su.1.1.4 &4.1.13.

Here Swami Vidyaranya says that Videhamukti is attained at the very moment in which knowledge arises, because when all bonds, which are all due to ignorance, are destroyed by knowledge, they can never come into being again. He supports this view with the statement in Sri Sankara's Bhashya on Brahma sutra, 4.1.13- "On its attainment, future and past sins are destroyed". This view is at variance with the generally accepted definition of Videhamukti which is that when the body of a Jivanmukta falls, he becomes a Videhamukta. Ch.up, 6.14.2 says "He remains here only as long as he is not released (from the body). The moment he is released, he becomes one with the All". In Vakyavritti, 52-53 it is said, "Through the effect of praarabdha karma he becomes a Jivanmukta. Then, on the exhaustion of that karma he attains the supreme state of bliss, called Kaivalya, from which there is no return". In Brahma sutra, 4.1.19, it is said, "After exhausting the other two (the good and bad effects of Prarabdha karma), he attains it (Brahman)". Laghu Yogavaasishtha, 5.98 says that when the body falls, the Jivanmukta gives up that state and becomes a Videhamukta.

Vidyaranya says that these two positions are not contradictory because they are based on different points of view. The views quoted above take the word 'deha' in Videhamukti to mean the existing and all future bodies collectively. Therefore, according to them Videhamukti can take place only when the present body has ceased to exist and no future body is possible. But Vidyaranya uses this word in the sense of 'future body' only. Thus, as soon as it becomes clear that there can be no future embodiment for the person, he becomes a Videhamukta. Therefore, Videhamukti, in the sense of preclusion of future embodiment, is simultaneous with the rise of Self-knowledge.

Thus it is established that knowledge is the direct means of attaining Videhamukti, while the obliteration of latent impressions and the dissolution of the mind are subordinate, being only the means of attaining knowledge. For Jivanmukti the obliteration of latent impressions (vaasanaa-kshaya) and dissolution of the mind (mano naasa) are the principal means.

Now a doubt arises. When a Vividisha Sannyasi has accomplished these three means and thereby reached the stage of Vidvat Sannyasa, has he still to endeavour afresh for acquiring these? The answer is that knowledge will continue to exist, but the other two have to be striven for afresh. The student fit for the acquisition of knowledge is of two kinds: he who has practiced meditation and he who has not yet done so. To the student who has practiced meditation to the extent of actually realizing the object of meditation, Vidvat Sannyasa and Jivanmukti will follow of their own accord because of his firm hold over the obliteration of vaasanaas and the dissolution of the mind. Nowadays men rush in quest of Self-knowledge, out of sheer curiosity, without going through the preliminary stage of upaasanaa. They accomplish obliteration of vaasanaas and dissolution of the mind temporarily. By study, reflection and meditation on the Vedantic texts ignorance, doubt and false perception are removed and knowledge is attained. In the absence of amore powerful means which could resuscitate the ignorance, the knowledge remains steady. But the obliteration of vaasanaas and dissolution of the mind can be easily extinguished, like a lamp exposed to the breeze, for want of steady application and because of being influenced by praarabdha karma. This means that for such Vidvatsannyaasis only the knowledge continues, but the other two are to be accomplished by effort.

Vaasanaa or latent impression has been described by Vasishtha as intense hankering after things to such an extent that the mind becomes totally obsessed by it. This results in the real nature of things and their past or future effects being completely lost sight of. The person then identifies himself with the thing he hankers after and his vision becomes clouded. The blind attachment that people have towards their traditional customs and manners, their countries and their communities is cited as an example. Keeping in view the vaasanaa of this kind, it is said in Br. up,4.5.4:-- 'He shapes his ideas in

accordance with his desires, he does such acts as fulfill his ideas, he becomes that which he does'.

Vaasanaasare of two kinds: pure and impure. Impure vaasanaas result in continuation of the cycle of birth and death. The pure vaasanaa is like seeds sown after being roasted on fire, which do not sprout. It does not cause rebirth. The impure vaasanaa is described as of the form of very dense ignorance. Ignorance is that which veils the distinction between the five sheaths and the Witness Consciousness. This kind of vaasanaa is spoken of as demoniac nature in Bh. Gita, ch.16.

The pure vaasanaa is of that kind which knows what is to be known, namely, the Self. This is described in Gita, ch.13, verses 13 to 18. The conditioned and unconditioned forms of Brahman are set forth in these verses to enable the comprehension of Its tatastha-lakshana and svarupa-lakshana. The former is a random quality applied exclusively to signify a thing, for instance, pointing out the house of a particular person as that on which a crow is sitting. The latter is the quality which defines a thing by its permanent feature, as for example, 'that which is highly luminous is the moon'.

That activity of the senses which is pervaded by an undercurrent of the perception of the Reality is called 'pure vaasanaa'. This is of use only for maintaining life in the body. It does not produce either demoniac qualities like hypocrisy, vanity and the like or dharma or adharma, which lead to future birth. It is like roasted grains which do not germinate.

Impure vaasanaa is of three kinds: desire for (unblemished reputation in) the world (loka vaasanaa), obsession with learning (saastra vaasanaa) and undue attachment to the body (deha vaasanaa). The first one takes the form 'I want to be always praised by everyone'. This is called impure because it is something impossible of achievement. No one, however good, can always escape slander. Even absolutely blemishless Sita was slandered. People speak ill of others merely because of local peculiarities. The southern Brahmanas censure the northerners, well-versed in the Vedas, as meat-eaters. The northern Brahmanas retaliate by ridiculing the southern custom of marrying the daughter of a maternal uncle and for carrying earthenware during travel. A pure man is looked upon as a devil, a clever man as presumptuous, a man of forbearance as weak, a strong man as cruel, an absent-minded man as a thief, and a handsome man as lewd. Thus nobody can please everyone. So the scriptures advise us to treat censure and praise alike.

The obsession with learning (saastra vaasanaa) is of three kinds: addiction to study, addiction to many scriptural texts and obsession with the mechanical observance of injunctions with regard to the performance of rituals. The first

only is exemplified by sage Bharadvaja, who was not satisfied with having devoted three successive lives to the study of the Vedas and continued the same in his fourth life also. This is also an impure vaasanaa because it is not possible of achievement. Indra cured him of this by explaining to him the impossibility of his undertaking and initiated him into the knowledge of the conditioned Brahman for the attainment of a higher end.

Addiction to many scriptural texts is also an impure vaasanaa because it is not the highest aim. The example for this is Durvasa. Once he went with a cart-load of scriptural works to Lord Mahadeva. Narada ridiculed him by comparing him to a donkey carrying a huge load. Durvasa became angry and threw away the books into the ocean. Lord Mahadeva then imparted to him the knowledge of the Self which does not come from study alone.

Obsession with injunctions relating to the performance of rites is exemplified by Nidagha, as described in Vishnu purana. Another example of this is Daasura who, because of the intensity of his desire to adhere to the injunctions, could not find any place in the whole world pure enough for the performance of rites. This mad desire for performing karma is also an impure vaasanaa because it results in the person continuing in the cycle of repeated birth and death. Saastra vaasanaa is also impure for another reason, namely, that it is the cause of vanity.

Deha vaasanaa is of three kinds-- looking upon the body as the Self, concern about making the body attractive and desire to remove defects in the body. The first two are clearly impure vaasanaas because they are obstacles to spiritual progress. The third is impossible of achievement because the body is essentially impure and so it is also an impure vaasanaa.

All these three vaasanaas should therefore be given up by discriminating people, since they obstruct the rise of knowledge in the seekers and affect the permanence of the knowledge acquired by the knower. The impurity of the vaasanaas arising from a demoniac nature, which take the form of hypocrisy, vanity and the like, is well-known and so it goes without saying that this has to be destroyed.

Justas the vaasanaas have to be obliterated, the mind has also to be dissolved. The Tarkikas hold that the mind is an eternal substance of atomic dimension. In this view the mind can never be dissolved. This view is not accepted by Vedantins. They hold that the mind is a substance with parts, is not eternal and is capable of transforming itself into various forms. The mind is defined thus in the Br. up,1.5.3 -- "Desire, will, doubt, belief, disbelief, resoluteness, irresoluteness, shame, intelligence, fear, --- all these make up the mind". These transformations are directly perceived by the Witnessing Self. The sense organs cannot experience their objects without the co-

operation of the mind. This internal organ is called manas when it performs the function of thinking and debating; it is called chitta when it performs an act of perception. This chitta is of the nature of sattva, rajas and tamas. When tamas predominates, demoniac qualities make their appearance. The predominance of rajas gives rise to the three vaasanaas -- loka vaasanaa, saastra vaasanaa and deha vaasanaa. When sattva gains mastery, divine qualities become established. Sattva is the principal material cause of the mind; rajas and tamas are only accessories. Therefore sattva is the residual native form of the mind of an enlightened person, since he has got rid of rajas and tamas. Such a mind is one-pointed, being free from rajas which is the cause of fickleness. It is also very subtle, being free from tamas which is the cause of the gross forms assumed by the not-self. Such a mind is fit to receive enlightenment.

Bondage is nothing but the bond of vaasanaas and liberation is the obliteration of vaasanaas. One should first give up the three kinds of vaasanaas relating to the world, learning and the body mentioned above, as well as the desire for objects of enjoyment. Then one should set up a current of pure vaasanaas such as friendship, compassion, contentment and indifference towards happiness and sorrow, and other pairs of opposites. The hankering after pleasures contaminates the mind. If a person is friendly towards those who are happy and looks upon their happiness as his, hankering after pleasures will vanish. Attaining mental equilibrium in this manner, one should remain attached only to knowledge of the Reality. Ultimately even the desire for knowledge should be given up, because it is also only something conceived by the mind and the intellect.

The three vaasanaas described above, namely, loka vaasanaa, saastra vaasanaa and deha vaasanaa are collectively called 'mental vaasanaa'. There is another kind of vaasanaa known as vishaya vaasanaa which relates to objects of enjoyment. By objects are meant sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Mental vaasanaa is that impression which is born of the desire for these; vaasanaas relating to objects are impressions born of actual enjoyment of desired things.

It may be asked, how is it possible to give up vaasanaas, which have no form? Things which have form, like dust and straw, can be swept away with a brush, but how to remove vaasanaas which have no form? The answer is that this can be done by cultivating friendship and similar virtues. These are described by Patanjali in his yoga aphorisms: 'The mind becomes serene by the practice of friendship, compassion, joy, and indifference respectively, towards those who are happy, those who are suffering, those who are virtuous and those who are sinful' (Yoga sutra 1.33). If one adopts a friendly disposition towards those who are happy, and identifies himself with them to such an extent that he looks upon their happiness as his own, he will not

hanker after happiness and his mind will be calm and serene. If one has compassion for every miserable being and feels that no one should experience sorrow of any kind, then too, the mind will become serene. It has been said, "Life is as dear to all beings as it is to oneself; the wise feel compassion for every being, taking their own selves as the standard of comparison".

If one feels joy at the sight of virtuous men, one would, of one's own accord, perform virtuous acts. If one adopts an attitude of indifference towards sinful men, and is not tempted to adopt their means, one can keep away from sin. By all these means the mind can be made calm. By adopting an attitude of friendliness towards those who are happy, one not only becomes free from attachment, but also free from malice, jealousy, and similar defects. Malice results in maligning the virtuous. Jealousy is the unwillingness to tolerate the superiority or virtue of another. When, out of friendliness, one looks upon the happiness of others as one's own, malice and jealousy will have no place. When one feels compassion for the miserable the vanity arising from one's own state of prosperity vanishes. This vanity is what has been referred to in the Bhagavadgita thus: "I am the lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful, happy; I am rich, well-born; who is there equal to me?" (16. 14-15).

It has been said above that if a person cultivates the habit of becoming exalted when he sees a virtuous person he will become more inclined to perform such virtuous acts himself. Now a question may arise, will not such an inclination be inappropriate in a yogin? It has been said earlier under 'saastra vaasanaa' that the mad desire for performing karma is also an impure vaasanaa because it also leads to rebirth. The answer is that what was implied there was only acts of virtue done with a motive. The virtuous acts referred to here are those which, being 'neither white nor black' do not lead to rebirth. Patanjali's yoga sutra 4.7 says: "Actions are neither white nor black in the case of yogins; in the case of others they are of three kinds". Actions sanctioned by the scripture, when performed with desire for the fruit are 'white'. Actions prohibited by scripture are 'black'. Actions which partake of both these qualities are 'mixed'. These three lead to three kinds of re-embodiment as stated by Sri Sureshvaracharya in Naishkarmyasiddhi, 1.41: "A person who, because of ignorance, considers himself as the performer of actions, attains the status of a god by doing desire-prompted good deeds, goes to hell by doing prohibited actions and attains the status of a human being by doing both good and bad deeds".

The actions performed by a yogi are described as non-white because they are not prompted by desire.

The real yogis are only those whose minds are serene because of the cultivation of qualities such as friendliness mentioned earlier. They naturally perform only virtuous actions.

The qualities described in the previous chapter as the characteristics of the Jivanmukta and Sthitaprajna, if cultivated by the spiritual aspirant, will destroy all impure vaasanas.

One should examine one's own mind and find out what are the impure vaasanas there. He should cultivate such pure vaasanas as are necessary to counteract his impure vaasanas. Just as a person who is disgusted with worldly life takes to renunciation, a person afflicted by impure vaasanas such as arrogance due to learning, opulence, pedigree, etc., should cultivate discrimination to counteract them.

In Laghu Yoga vaasishtha king Janaka points out the means of attaining discrimination thus: One should ask oneself, "How can one place faith in greatness? Those who were considered great in the past are no more now. Where has the fabulous wealth of emperors gone? Where are the innumerable worlds created by Brahma? The old order of things has gone into oblivion. Millions of Brahmas have come and gone. Myriads of heavens have vanished one after another. The most powerful emperors of the past are now nothing more than dust. This being so, how can the existence of persons like me be of any consequence?"

Now a question arises. The discrimination mentioned above should precede the rise of the knowledge of the Reality because such knowledge can arise only after discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral has been acquired. Here the means to Jivanmukti such as the obliteration of vaasanaas for one who has already realized Brahman are being dealt with. Is a discussion of discrimination not out of place here?

Svami Vidyaranya explains that normally one can realize Brahman only after the acquisition of the four preliminary requisites, namely, discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, detachment, the six qualities starting with control of the mind, and yearning for liberation. But king Janaka is said to have attained realization as soon as he heard the Siddhagita in Yogavaasishtha. This happened because of the merit (punya) accumulated by him in past births. After that he had to cultivate discrimination in order to attain calmness of mind. So reference to discrimination at this stage is relevant in his case.

It may be objected that since all impure vaasanaas must have disappeared on the attainment of knowledge, effort to cultivate pure vaasanaas is not necessary. The answer is that it is not so as a general rule. For example,

impure vaasanaas are seen to have existed even after dawn of knowledge in Yajnavalkya, Bhagiratha and others. Yajnavalkya as well as his opponents Ushasta, Kahola and others had vast pride of learning as is evident from the fact that they entered into a debate with the desire for victory. It cannot be said that they had only other knowledge and not knowledge of Brahman, because all the questions and answers in the debate related to Brahman. Their knowledge of Brahman cannot be said to be only mediate and not immediate, because in that case our knowledge of Brahman arising from their statements would be also only be mediate. Moreover, the questions put were concerned with the direct and immediate knowledge of Brahman.

Now an objection may be raised: Acharya Sankara says in Upadesa Sahasri,12.13 that only a person who has given up the egoism that he is a knower of Brahman is a real knower of the Self and not others. In Naishkarmyasiddhi, 1.75, Sureshvaracharya says, "Identification with the body which is due to demoniac delusion is not possible for an enlightened person. If even an enlightened person has such delusion then Brahman-realization would be of no use". It follows from these that there cannot be pride of learning in an enlightened person.

The answer to this objection is: the enlightenment referred to in these verses is that of a person who has become a Jivanmukta. It is accepted by us also that there cannot be any pride of learning in a Jivanmukta. Here we are making a distinction between a Sthitaprajna (i.e. a Jivanmukta) and a mere knower of the Self. As regards the mere knower, Sureshvaracharya says in Br. Up. Bhashyavartika, 1.4.1539 and 1.4.1746, "Let attachment and the like remain, their presence does not do any harm. What harm can avidya do when it is like a snake whose fangs have been removed? Desire, etc., arising from ignorance of the Reality are the cause of bondage, but for a knower of the Reality these do not cause bondage just as seeds which have been roasted cannot sprout even though they retain their appearance. It has been said in Varahopanishad, 3.24, 25, "Attachment, etc., are burnt out by the fire of discrimination as soon as they arise; how can they sprout?".

Yajnavalkya, while engaged in debate with Ushasta, Kahola and others (as described in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) had not attained the state of Jivanmukta because he was to enter vidvat sannyasa in order to obtain peace of mind. He shows, not only the desire to win over his opponents, but also greed for gold. Later he cursed Sakalya to death. But it should not be thought that such a heinous sin as killing a Brahmana would bar him from liberation; for the Kaushitaki upanishad says, "He does not lose that state by any act whatever, whether it is matricide, patricide, theft or foeticide" (3.1). Even reputed knowers of Brahman, like Yajnavalkya, are subject to the influence of impure vaasanaa. Vasishtha says in Yoga vaasishtha that Bhagiratha, though a knower of the Reality, could not get peace of mind while

engaged in ruling over his kingdom because of the impact of impure vaasanaas. He therefore renounced everything and only then attained peace. It therefore follows that we should carefully examine our defects caused by impure vaasanaas, with the same strictness with which we detect the defects of others, and apply the necessary remedies. It has been said in a smriti, "If a man of the world, who is adept at detecting the defects of others, applies his skill to detect his own faults, he will certainly be liberated from the bonds of ignorance".

To answer the question, "What is the remedy for the pride born of leaning", it has first to be decided whose pride is meant. Is it the pride of the leaned man who seeks to show that others are inferior to him, or is it the pride of some other person who wants to show that he is superior? In the first case, the learned man should always keep in mind that someday it will be crushed by someone superior. If the pride is in some other person who wants to show that he is superior to us in knowledge, the best course will to say to oneself, "That man is puffed up with pride; let him insult or slander me; I do not lose anything thereby". It has been said: "If they slander the Self in me, they slander only themselves. If they slander my body, I should look upon them as my friends". In Naishkarmya siddhi

It has been said: "What does it matter to a person who has cast off his excreta, if someone comments on its unclean nature? In the same manner, when a person has dissociated himself from both the gross and subtle bodies through discrimination, will he be affected in the least if some one speaks ill of them?" (2.16-17).

The sruti says: "Without deviating from the path of rectitude, the yogin should so conduct himself as to make people avoid his company in sheer disgust" (Narada parivrajakopanishad, 5.30).

The two varieties of pride of learning described above which were seen in Yajnavalkya and others should be got rid of by discrimination.

The method of getting rid of the greed for wealth is described thus: "There is considerable effort and trouble involved in the acquisition of wealth, as also in its preservation; if it is spent or lost there is great anguish. O fie upon wealth, which produces unhappiness at every step".

Anger is also of two kinds: anger in oneself directed at others, and anger in others directed to oneself. With regard to the first it is said: "While you become angry with someone who has done you some harm, why do you not feel angry with that same emotion which does even more harm by blocking your way to the attainment of the four purusharthas and which affects even your physical and mental well-being?"

With regard to the second kind, it has been said: "One should never give room for the thought, 'I have offended none. So anger towards me is not justified'. On the other hand every one should consider as his gravest offence the inability to free himself from bondage. He should bow to the god of anger who burns away his own seat and bestows detachment by imparting the knowledge of his faults".

Attachment to wife and children should also be eradicated in the same manner as greed and anger.

All impure vaasanaas should thus be eradicated by reminding oneself of the evil consequences that flow from them. Sage Vasishtha says in Yoga vaasishtha: "If you put forth sufficient effort and destroy all vaasanaas, all your ills, physical and mental, will get dissolved. Then access to the highest state will become attainable".

As stated by the Lord in Bhagavadgita, 2.60, 67, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of even a wise man striving for perfection. If the mind yields to the senses, its discrimination is carried away, just as a gale carries away a ship". So one should restrain all the senses and fix the mind on the Lord as the supreme goal. The wisdom of a person who has brought his senses under control becomes steady.

When qualities such are friendship are cultivated and become firmly established, the impure vaasanaas will be obliterated.

The Narada parivrajakopanishad says: "The mendicant who is tongue-less, impotent, lame, blind, deaf, and mad certainly attains liberation. He is tongue-less who, while eating, is not attached to the food and does not concern himself with its pleasantness or unpleasantness; while speaking he is moderate and always tells the truth with the intention of doing good to others. He is impotent who remains unaffected at the sight of a young woman of sixteen, as of a girl just born, or a woman bent double with the weight of years. He whose movements are confined to begging alms or answering the calls of nature, and do not by any means exceed a yojana (about five miles) is a lame man. He is blind, the ken of whose eye, whether standing or walking, does not extend far beyond four yoke-lengths. He who turns a deaf ear to words uttered within ear-shot, however friendly or pleasing, is said to be deaf. The mendicant who, though alert and with senses unimpaired, behaves as if he is asleep is said to be a mad man. Such a person never indulges in censure or praise, nor talk too much and treats all alike. He would never be in the company of a woman, nor recall to mind any woman seen before (3.62-68)".

Realizing that all the insentient objects in this universe are only manifestations of pure consciousness (Brahman),one should fix the mind only on pure consciousness. Just as a goldsmith, when buying an old bracelet of gold, fixes his mind only on the weight and the colour of the gold and not on the form of the bracelet or its beauty, the seeker should fix his mind only on pure consciousness while seeing the various objects in the world. The effort in this regard should be kept up until the consciousness of the phenomenal objects is obliterated and the consciousness of Brahman becomes as natural as breathing.

He who, though awake, keeps his mind in a tranquil state and does not react to the world around, as in sleep, is the truly liberated person. The liberated man with a virile intellect, who has eradicated all desires from his heart, is ever free from all agitation of the mind, and is himself the great Isvara. Whether he is in samadhi or not, whether he performs the rituals laid down for his order or not, he stands liberated, free from all attachment. With his mind cleared of all vaasanaas, it makes no difference whether he performs karma or not. He has no concern with efforts to attain samadhi or with performing japa, etc. He may engage himself in action in the world, but he remains untouched by them. He is not dejected by adversity. He never swerves from the path of self-restraint.

King Janaka had attained this state. He therefore performed his duties as the king without the least attachment to the results. He did not think of the past or worry about the future, but lived in the present, his heart ever filled with bliss.

Khyati Vada

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Manu Smriti: Common Dharmas

By P. R. Kannan

ॐ श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः

मनुस्मृत्यांसामान्यधर्माः
COMMON DHARMAS IN MANUSMRITI

“भूयोभूयोभाविनोभूमिपालानत्वानत्वायाचतेरामचन्द्रः।

सामान्योऽयंधर्मसेतुर्-नराणांकालेकालेपालनीयोभवद्भिः॥“

- (Skanda Purana, Sethu Khanda)

“O future kings! This Ramachandra bows to you again and again and begs of you to protect and preserve always from time to time this bridge of Dharma, meant for humanity in general.”

Manusmriti is a book of laws, authored by the earliest and the most authoritative Law-giver, Bhagavan Manu. This book derives its authority from the Vedas and lays down rules of conduct and procedures of rituals for individuals in different walks of life. Known also as Dharmasastra, this unique book deals with human life right from birth to death. In Sanatana Dharma, there are four Purusharthas (objectives of human life) to be achieved by every human being on earth, viz. Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire) and Moksha (Liberation). Manusmriti sets out clear guidelines not only on how to follow the path of Dharma, but also on how to do it with the aim of achieving the other three Purusharthas. Tradition has it that Lord Brahma taught this Smriti to the first Manu, Swayambhuva Manu, who in turn enlightened Sage Bhrigu on this. The presently available text of about 3000 verses claims its source to this sage, as handed down through successive generations.

In Manusmriti there are many verses dealing with Samanya Dharmas, eternal rules of conduct, applicable to all humans at all times. As instructed by Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, the following compilation of such verses with translation has been prepared. An essay on the ten fundamental virtues to be cultivated by every human being, as enunciated by Manu, is also appended.

Contents

4. Discipline in Gurukula
5. Serving Parents and Guru
6. Honouring Elders
7. Honour & Status of Women
8. Grihasthasrama
9. Living and Travel
10. Rules of Daily Routine
11. Virtuous Conduct
12. Truthful Speech
13. Charity
14. Non-violence
15. Purity
16. Control of Senses and Mind
17. Tapas (Austerity)
18. Karmas and Fruits
19. Three Gunas (Attributes)
20. Sins and Expiation
21. Ruler's Qualities
22. Ruler and his Duties
23. Justice by King
24. Vanaprastha
25. Sanyasa
26. Gnana
Appendix: An Essay on Ten Fundamental Virtues

1. Brahma's Creation & Yugas

कालंकालविभक्तीश्चनक्षत्राणिग्रहान्स्तथा।

सरितःसागरान्शैलान्समानिविषमाणिच। (१:२४)

(At the beginning) Brahma created Time and its divisions, stars, planets, rivers, oceans, mountains and even and uneven terrains. (1:24)

तपोवाचंरतिंचैवकामंचक्रोधमेवच।

सृष्टिंससर्जचैवेमांस्रष्टुंइच्छन्इमाःप्रजाः॥ (१:२५)

He also created penance, speech, mental pleasure, desire and anger as prelude to creating humans. (1:25)

कर्मणांचविवेकार्थंधर्माधर्मौव्यवेचयत्।

द्वन्द्वैःअयोजयच्चेमाःसुखदुःखादिभिःप्रजाः। (१:२६)

He laid out Dharma (dos) and Adharma (donts) for proper discrimination of actions and he associated pleasures and sorrows with them respectively. (1:26)

हिंस्राहिंस्रेमृदुक्रूरेधर्माधर्मावृतानृते।

यद्यस्ययोऽदधात्सर्गेततस्यस्वयमाविशत्॥ (१:२९)

At the beginning of creation, qualities like violence and non-violence, softness and cruelty, righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and falsehood entered creatures in the same manner they possessed them prior to dissolution. (Karmic tendencies of previous births give rise to corresponding qualities in the respective creatures in the new creation.) (1:29)

चतुष्पात्सकलोधर्मःसत्यंचैवकृतेयुगे।

नाधर्मेणआगमःकश्चित्मनुष्यान्प्रतिवर्तते॥ (१:८१)

In the Kritayuga, dharma stood on all four legs. (Dharma is generally picturised in the form of bull with four legs- penance, knowledge, sacrifices and charity; refer to Manusmriti 1:86). Truth ruled supreme; nothing came to humans through unrighteous means. (1:81)

इतरेषुआगमात्धर्मःपादशस्तुअवरोपितः।

चौरिक-अनृत-मायाभिःधर्मश्चापैतिपादशः॥ (१:८२)

In the other three yugas, Dharma steadily declined through theft, falsehood and deceit. (1:82)

अरोगाःसर्वसिद्धार्थाःचतुर्वर्ष-शतायुषः।

कृतेत्रेतादिषुह्येषां- आयुर्- ह्रसतिपादशः॥ (१:८३)

In Kritayuga, people were free from disease, had all desires fulfilled and lived for 400 years. In the following Treta, Dvapara and Kali yugas, their lifespan went on declining by a quarter. (1:83)

तपःपरंकृतयुगेत्रेतायांज्ञानमुच्यते।

द्वापरेयज्ञमेवाहुःदानमेकंकलौयुगे॥ (१:८६)

In Kritayuga, penance is the greatest means; in Tretayuga, it is Knowledge; in Dvaparayuga, it is yagna (ritual sacrifice); in Kaliyuga, it is charity alone. (1:86)

2. Authorities for Dharma & Karmayoga

एवंआचारतोदृष्ट्वाधर्मस्यमुनयोगतिम्।

सर्वस्यतपसोमूलंआचारंजगृहुःपरम्॥ (१:११०)

Knowing thus that Dharma flows from conduct, the sages held that good conduct is the root of all austerity. (1:110)

विद्वद्भिःसेवितःसद्भिःनित्यंअद्वेषरागिभिः।

हृदयेन-अभ्यनुज्ञातोयोधर्मःतंनिबोधत॥ (२:१)

Know that as Dharma, which is practised by knowers of Veda, who are established in truth and ever free from attachment and hatred, and which is accepted wholeheartedly by them. (2:1)

कामात्मतानप्रशस्तानचैवेहास्त्-यकामता।

काम्योहिवेदाधिगमःकर्मयोगश्चवैदिकः॥ (२:२)

Looking for fruits of actins is not recommended (as it results in bondage). Complete freedom from desire is also not seen in this world. Hence knowing the import of Vedas and performing actions prescribed in Vedas in the spirit of Karmayoga (renouncing the sense of doership and not expecting fruits of action) is to be sought. (2:2)

संकल्पमूलःकाम्योवैयज्ञाःसंकल्पसंभवाः।

व्रतानियमधर्माश्चसर्वेसंकल्पदाःस्मृताः॥ (२:३)

Sankalpa is affirmation of the fruit of a particular action. All desires are rooted in Sankalpa. Yagnas (Vedic sacrifices) are born out of Sankalpa. All vratas (vows to be practised) and Yamas (tendencies to be conquered) are also rooted in Sankalpa. (2:3)

अकामस्यक्रियाकाचिद्-दृश्यतेनेहकर्हिचित्।

यद्यद्धिकुरुतेकिंचित्-तत्तत्कामस्यचेष्टितम्॥ (२:४)

No action is seen performed anywhere in this world, which is not propelled by desire. Whatever is done is all actuated by desire alone. (2:4)

तेषुसंयग्-वर्तमानोगच्छत्य्-अमरलोकताम्।

यथासंकल्पितांश्चेहसर्वान्-कामान्- समश्नुते॥ (२:५)

Doing prescribed actions in right way, man attains the world of Gods (also Liberation); in this world also, he enjoys fulfillment of all desires. (2:5)

वेदोऽखिलोधर्ममूलंस्मृतिशीलेचतद्विदाम्।

आचारश्चैवसाधूनाम्-आत्मनस्-तुष्टिरेवच॥ (२:६)

Veda is the root of all Dharma. Further the Smritis (based on Vedas), the virtues of the knowers of the Vedas, the conduct of the noble and self-satisfaction are also indicators of Dharma. (2:6)

यःकश्चित्-कस्यचिद्-धर्मोमनुनापरिकीर्तितः।

ससर्वोऽभिहितोवेदेसर्वज्ञानमयोहिसः॥ (२:७)

Whatever Dharma for whomsoever has been prescribed by Manu, it is all expounded in Veda; Manu is indeed embodiment of all knowledge. (2:7)

सर्वंतुसमवेक्ष्येदंनिखिलंज्ञानचक्षुषा।

श्रुति-प्रामाण्यतोविद्वान्-स्वधर्मेनिविशेतवै॥ (२:८)

Keeping all this in view through his eyes of knowledge, a learned man should engage in Swadharma (Dharma prescribed in Vedas and Smriti, applicable to himself) on the authority of Vedas. (2:8)

श्रुति-स्मृत्-युदितंधर्मम्-अनुतिष्ठन्हिमानवः।

इहकीर्तिम्-अवाप्नोतिप्रेत्यच-अनुत्तमंसुखम्॥ (२:९)

Practising Dharma as specified in Vedas and Smritis, man attains fame in this world and excellent happiness in the next world. (2:9)

श्रुतिस्तुवेदोविज्ञेयोधर्मशास्त्रंतुवैस्मृतिः।

तेसर्वार्थेषु-अमीमांस्येताभ्यांधर्मोहिनिर्बभौ॥ (२:१०)

'Sruti' is to be understood as Veda and 'Smriti' as Dharmasatra. All injunctions therein are beyond the ken of human logic and analysis. Dharma indeed shines in Sruti and Smriti.

योऽवमन्येततेमूलेहेतुशास्त्र-आश्रयात्-द्विजः।

ससाधुभिर्-बहिष्कार्योनास्तिकोवेदनिन्दकः॥ (२:११)

A scholar, who disregards the two basic authorities, Sruti and Smriti, by resorting to disputation, is to be shunned by the virtuous as aethist, who is given to censuring the Vedas. (2:11)

वेदःस्मृतिःसदाचारःस्वस्यचप्रियम्-आत्मनः।

एत-च्चतुर्विधंप्राहुःसाक्षाद्-धर्मस्यलक्षणम्। (२:१२)

The definition of Dharma is said to be fourfold - Veda, Smriti, noble conduct and self-satisfaction.

अर्थ-कामेषु-असक्तानांधर्मज्ञानंविधीयते।

धर्मंजिज्ञासमानानांप्रमाणंपरमंश्रुतिः॥ (२:१३)

True knowledge of Dharma is confined to those who are not attached to Artha (wealth) and Kama (desire). Sruti is the ultimate authority for those who desire knowledge of Dharma.

एतद्-देश-प्रसूतस्यसकाशाद्-अग्रजन्मनः।

स्वंस्वंचरित्रंशिक्षेरन्पृथिव्यांसर्व-मानवाः॥ (२:२०)

Let all people of the world learn their applicable rules of conduct from the wise persons born in this land (marked by holy places like Kurukshetra). (2:20)

3. Dharma the basic Purushartha (Aim of Human Life)

धर्मार्था-वुच्यतेश्रेयःकामार्थौधर्मएवच।

अर्थएवेहवाश्रेयस्-त्रिवर्गइतितुस्थितिः॥ (२:२२४)

Some say that Dharma and Artha are benefactors; some others say that Kama and Artha are good and yet others say that Dharma alone is beneficial. There are again people who say that Artha alone is beneficial. But the truth is that all the three are important. (This statement applies to ordinary people; for those who are intent on Moksha, Moksha alone is the focus.) (2:224)

धृतिःक्षमादमोऽस्तेयंशौचं-इन्द्रिय-निग्रहः।

धीर्-विद्यासत्यं-अक्रोधोदशकंधर्म-लक्षणम्॥ (६:९२)

Steadfastness (in pursuit of dharma), forbearance (not reciprocating evil), control of mind, not coveting others' property, purity (external and internal), control of senses, use of intellect in acquisition of scriptural knowledge, Self-knowledge, truth (in thought, word and deed) and abstinence from anger (when there is scope for anger) - these are the ten characteristics of dharma. (6:92)

नसीदन्-नपिधर्मेणमनोऽऽधर्मेनिवेशयेत्।

अधार्मिकाणांपापानां-आशुपश्यन्-विपर्ययम्॥ (४:१७१)

Even if suffering while practising dharma, one should never even think of engaging in adharma. Sinners, engaged in acts of adharma, though appearing happy initially, are soon seen falling into misery. (4:171)

नाधर्मश्-चरितोलोकेसद्यःफलतिगौरिव।

शनैर्-आवर्तमानस्तुकर्तुर्-मूलानिकृन्तति॥ (४:१७२)

Adharma, when practised, does not bring instant fruit, like land (which gives out foodgrains after a long time) (or, unlike cow, which provides milk immediately). The fruit returns slowly and roots out completely the well-being of the doer. (4:172)

यदिनात्मनिपुत्रेषुनचेत्-पुत्रेषुनप्तृषु।

नत्वेवतुकृतोऽधर्मःकर्तुर्-भवतिनिष्फलः॥ (४:१७३)

If Adharma practised has not piled fruit on the doer, it will heap the fruit on his sons or grandsons. If this is not so, the adharma practised by the doer will become fruitless. (4:173)

अधर्मेणैधतेतावत्-ततोभद्राणिपश्यति।

ततःसपत्नान्-जयतिसमूलस्तुविनश्यति॥ (४:१७४)

One, who practises adharma, experiences mundane prosperity initially, meets with many auspicious occurrences and then defeats his enemies. But in due course he perishes root and branch. (4:174)

परित्यजेद्-अर्थ-कामौयौस्यातामधर्म-विवर्जितौ।

धर्मंचाप्य्-असुखोदर्कंलोक-विक्रुष्टमेवच॥ (४:१७६)

Pursuit of Artha and Kama, if opposed to Dharma, should be abandoned. Even that dharma, which might bring unhappiness at a later stage or which is reviled by the society, should be discarded. (4:176)

धर्मं-शनैःसंचिनुयाद्-वल्मीकमिवपुत्तिकाः।

परलोक-सहायार्थंसर्व-भूतान्य्-अपीडयन्॥ (४:२३८)

Without harming any creature and for assistance in attaining welfare in the next world, one should gather dharma gradually, like white ants building ant-hill. (4:238)

नामुत्रहिसहायार्थंपितामाताचतिष्ठतः।

नपुत्र-दारानज्ञातिर्-धर्मस्-तिष्ठतिकेवलः॥ (४:२३९)

In the next world, neither one's father, mother, son and wife, nor relatives are available for help; it is dharma alone which stands by him. (4:239)

एकःप्रजायतेजन्तुर्-एकएवप्रलीयते।

एकोऽनुभुङ्क्तेसुकृतं-एकएवचदुष्कृतम्॥ (४:२४०)

A creature is born all alone; he dies all alone; he reaps the fruits of good deeds all alone; he reaps the fruits of evil deeds also all alone. (4:240)

एकएवसुहृद्-धर्मोनिधनेऽप्यनुयातियः।

शरीरेणसमंनाशंसर्वं-अन्यद्धिगच्छति॥ (८:१७)

Dharma is the only well-wisher and friend, which accompanies one even on death. All else (wife, sons and relatives) abandon him along with his body. (8:17)

मृतंशरीरं-उत्सृज्यकाष्ठ-लोष्ठ-समंक्षितौ।

विमुखाबान्धवायान्तिधर्मस्-तं-अनुगच्छति॥ (४:२४१)

The relatives leave the dead body on the ground like a log of wood or lump of earth and go away without turning back. It is dharma alone which accompanies the dead person. (4:241)

तस्माद्-धर्मंसहायार्थंनित्यंसंचिनुयाच्-छनैः।

धर्मेणहिसहायेनतमस्-तरतिदुस्तरम्॥ (४:२४२)

Hence one should always accumulate dharma gradually for assistance. It is only with dharma's assistance that one crosses the darkness, difficult to cross. (4:242)

धर्मएवहतोहन्तिधर्मोरक्षतिरक्षितः।

तस्माद्-धर्मोनहन्तव्योमानोधर्मोहतोऽवधीत्॥ (८:१५)

Dharma verily destroys one who destroys it; it is dharma again, which protects one who protects it. Hence one should take care not to attack (deviate from) dharma; if not it is sure to destroy him. (8:15)

यात्रा-मात्र-प्रसिद्ध्यर्थंस्वैःकर्मभिर्-अगर्हितैः।

अक्लेशेनशरीरस्यकुर्वीतधनसञ्चयम्॥ (४:३)

One should acquire only so much wealth as sufficient for family maintenance through actions beyond reproach without unduly torturing the body. (4:3)

सर्वंकर्मेदमायत्तंविधानेदैव-मानुषे।

तयोर्-दैवं-अचिन्त्यंतुमानुषेविद्यतेक्रिया॥ (७:२०५)

All actions in this world are dependent on two factors, destiny and human effort. Of the two, destiny is beyond one's control; hence action should be undertaken with full human effort. (7:205)

नेहेतार्थान्-प्रसङ्गेननविरुद्धेनकर्मणा।

नविद्यमानेष्व्-अर्थेषुनार्त्यामपियतस्ततः॥ (४:१५)

One should not earn money through his pet hobbies, nor prohibited acts. Even in adverse circumstances he should not earn money by unscrupulous means or sources. (4:15)

नात्मानं-अवमन्येतऊर्वाभिर्-असमृद्धिभिः।

आमृत्योःश्रियं-अन्विच्छेन्-नैनांमन्येतदुर्लभाम्॥ (४:१३७)

One should not reproach himself for past failures in acquisition of wealth. One should put in efforts to attain wealth till end of life. He should never regard it as unattainable. (4:137)

4. Discipline in Gurukula

लौकिकंवैदिकंवापितथा-आध्यात्मिकमेवच।

आददीतयतोज्ञानंतंपूर्वम्-अभिवादयेत्॥ (२:११७)

One should pay obeisance to Guru, who has given the knowledge of mundane matters, Vedic subjects and spiritual insights. (2:117)

शय्यासने-अध्याचरितेश्रेयसानसमाविशेत्।

शय्यासनस्थश्-चैवैनंप्रत्युत्थाय-अभिवादयेत्॥ (२:११९)

One should not use the bed or seat, even casually used by Guru or elders. If himself in bed or seat, he should get up and pay obeisance to Guru on the latter's arrival. (2:119)

उपाध्यायान्-दशाचार्यआचार्याणांशतंपिता।

सहस्रंतुपितॄन्-मातागौरवेण-अतिरिच्यते॥ (२:१४५)

An Acharya is ten times greater than Upadhyaya. (Upadhyaya is one who teaches Vedas and Vedangas for a living; Acharya is one who performs the Upanayanam and initiates the disciple into Vedas and rituals along with their secrets.) The father is ten times greater than Acharya; but the mother is a thousand times greater in glory than father. (2:145)

अहिंसयैवभूतानांकार्यंश्रेयो-अनुशासनम्।

वाक्चैवमधुराश्लक्ष्णाप्रयोज्याधर्मम्-इच्छता॥ (२:१५९)

The teacher should enforce discipline for the good of the disciple through non-violent means and sweet and gentle speech, with dharma in view. (2:159)

सेवेतेमांस्तुनियमान्-ब्रह्मचारीगुरौवसन्।

सन्नियम्य-इन्द्रिय-ग्रामंततो-वृद्ध्यर्थम्-आत्मनः॥ (२:१७५)

The brahmachari, while living in the Gurukula, must observe these rules (of discipline) and have the senses restrained in order to enrich his self. (2:175)

वर्जयेन्-मधु-मांसंचगन्धंमाल्यंरसान्-स्त्रियः।

शुक्तानियानिसर्वाणिप्राणिनांचैवहिंसनम्॥ (२:१७७)

He must abstain from use of liquor (or honey), flesh, fragrant substances, garland, women and vinegar (substances remaining tasty over long periods of time) and never engage in violence to living creatures. (2:177)

अभ्यङ्गम्-अञ्जनंचाक्ष्णोर्-उपानच्-छत्र-धारणम्।

कामंक्रोधंचलोभंचनर्तनंगीत-वादनम्॥ (२:१७८)

He must abstain from oil-bath, applying collyrium in eyes, use of footwear and umbrella; he should keep himself away from lust, anger, greed, dance and vocal and instrumental music. (2:178)

द्यूतंचजनवादंचपरिवादंतथा-अनृतम्।

स्त्रीणांचप्रेक्षण-आलम्भं-उपघातंपरस्यच॥ (२:१७९)

He must abstain from gambling, meaningless gossip, talking of others' faults, indulging in falsehood, gazing at and embracing women and harming others. (2:179)

ब्रह्मारंभेऽवसानेचपादौग्राह्यौगुरोःसदा।

संहत्यहस्ता-वध्येयंसहिब्रह्मान्जलिःस्मृतः॥ (२:७१)

The feet of Guru shall be touched (by the disciple) always at the beginning and close of each session of learning of Veda from the Guru, the hands remaining folded in respect thereafter. This is said to be Brahmanjali. (2:71)

व्यत्यस्तपाणिनोकार्यं-उपसंग्रहणंगुरोः।

सव्येनसव्यःस्प्रष्टव्योदक्षिणेनचदक्षिणः॥ (२:७२)

The right foot of Guru shall be touched with right hand and left foot with left hand (by the disciple), the hands crossing each other. (2:72)

अध्येष्यमाणंतुगुरुर्- नित्यकालं-अतन्द्रितः।

अधीष्वभोइतिब्रूयाद्-विरामोऽस्त्वितिचारमेत्॥ (२:७३)

The Guru should always tell the disciple vigilantly to start learning at the beginning (of session) and to halt at the time of rest. (2:73)

विधियज्ञाज्-जपयज्ञोविशिष्टोदशभिर्-गुणैः।

उपांशुःस्याच्छतगुणःसाहस्रोमानसःस्मृतः॥ (२:८५)

Japayagna (recitation of mantra) is ten times superior to ritualistic yagnas. Japa in Upamsu mode (recitation audible only to reciter) is a hundred times

superior (to loud chanting) and mental Japa (with no movement of tongue and lips) is a thousand times superior. (2:85)

हीनान्न-वस्त्र-वेषःस्यात्-सर्वदागुरु-सन्निधौ।

उत्तिष्ठेत्-प्रथमंचास्यचरमंचैवसंविशेत्॥ (२:१९४)

His food, dress and appearance must always be lesser than that of the Guru. He should get up from bed before the Guru and go to bed after the Guru. (2:194)

प्रतिश्रवण-संभाषेशयानोनसमाचरेत्।

नासीनोनचभुञ्जानोनतिष्ठन्नोपराङ्मुखः॥ (२:१९५)

The disciple should not take instructions from or engage in conversation with the Guru, when he himself is lying in bed, seated, is eating, standing or facing backwards. (2:195)

आसीनस्यस्थितःकुर्याद्-अभिगच्छंस्तुतिष्ठतः।

प्रत्युद्गम्यत्वाव्रजतःपश्चाद्-धावंस्तुधावतः॥ (२:१९६)

For the disciple to talk with or take instructions from the Guru, he should stand if Guru is seated; he should go forward in front of Guru if he is standing; he should go and receive the Guru if he is coming; he should run after Guru, if he happens to run. (2:196)

पराङ्मुखस्य-अभिमुखोदूरस्थस्यैत्यचांतिकम्।

प्रणम्यतुशयानस्यनिदेशेचैवतिष्ठतः॥ (२:१९७)

He should go and stand facing the Guru, if he is facing backwards; he should go near the Guru, if he is at a distance; he should pay obeisance humbly, if the Guru is lying in bed or standing near. (2:197)

नीचंशय्यासनंचास्यसर्वदागुरुसन्निधौ।

गुरोस्तुचक्षुर्-विषयेनयथेष्टासनोभवेत्॥ (२:१९८)

In Guru’s presence, the disciple should always be seated at a level lower than him. Within the sight of the Guru, he should not sit disrespectfully on a seat. (2:198)

नोदाहरेद्-अस्यनामपरोक्षमपिकेवलम्।

नचैवास्य्-आनुकुर्वीतगति-भाषित-चेष्टितम्॥ (२:१९९)

Even during Guru’s absence, he should not utter the Guru’s mere name (without honorifics like Acharya, Guru etc.). He should not also imitate the Guru’s gait, speech and behavior (mockingly). (2:199)

गुरोर्-यत्रपरीवादोनिन्दावापिप्रवर्तते।

कर्णौतत्रपिधातव्यौगन्तव्यंवाततोऽन्यतः॥ (२:२००)

Where the Guru is maligned or slandered, the disciple should close his ears or leave for some other place. (2:200)

परीवादात्-खरोभवतिश्वावैभवतिनिन्दकः।

परिभोक्ताकृमिर्-भवतिकीटोभवतिमत्सरी॥ (२:२०१)

By maligning the Guru, the disciple becomes a donkey (in his next life). By slandering the Guru, he becomes a dog. One, who enjoys the possessions of the Guru (illegally), becomes a worm; one who is jealous of the Guru becomes an insect. (2:201)

दूरस्थोनार्चयेद्-एनंनक्रुद्धोनान्तिकेस्त्रियाः।

यानासनस्थश्च-एव-एनं-अवरुह्य-अभिवादयेत्॥ (२:२०२)

When the disciple is at a distance from the Guru, he should not worship the Guru (through another person). When he is angry or in the company of women, he should also not worship the Guru. When the disciple is seated in a vehicle, he should get down and pay obeisance to the Guru. (2:202)

गुरुप्रतिवातेऽनुवातेचनासीतगुरुणासह।

असंश्रवेचैवगुरोर्नकिंचिदपिकीर्तयेत्॥ (२:२०३)

The disciple should not sit in such a place, where the wind from Guru's side would touch him, nor where the wind from his side would touch the Guru. He should not talk anything (about Guru or anyone else) when Guru is not within hearing distance. (2:203)

गोऽश्व-उष्ट्र-यान-प्रासाद-स्रस्तरेषुकटेषुच।

आसीतगुरुणासार्धंशिला-फलक-नौषुच॥ (२:२०४)

The disciple may sit along with the Guru in a cart drawn by bullock, horse or camel, on the roof of building, in couches or straw mats, stones, wooden planks or boats. (2:204)

गुरोर्-गुरौसन्निहितेगुरुवद्-वृत्तिम्-आचरेत्।

नचानिसृष्टोगुरुणास्वान्-गुरून्-अभिवादयेत्॥ (२:२०५)

When the disciple comes across the Guru of his own Guru, he should treat him like his own Guru. In the Guru's presence, he should not worship elders (like his parents) unless instructed by Guru. (2:205)

विद्यागुरुष्वेतदेवनित्यावृत्तिःस्वयोनिषु।

प्रतिषेधत्सुचाधर्मान्-हितंचोपदिशत्स्वपि॥ (२:२०६)

The disciple should treat the following persons like his own Guru: other teachers, family elders (like uncle), those who prevent him from engaging in Adharma and those who preach moral good. (2:206)

श्रेयःसुगुरुवद्-वृत्तिंनित्यमेवसमाचरेत्।

गुरुपुत्रेषुचार्येषुगुरोश्चैवस्वबन्धुषु॥ (२:२०७)

The disciple should treat the following persons like his own Guru: those who excel in knowledge and discipline, sons of Guru, who are senior in age to him and Guru's relatives. (2:207)

बालःसमानजन्मावाशिष्योवायज्ञकर्मणि।

अध्यापयन्-गुरुसुतोगुरुवन्- मानं-अर्हति॥ (२:२०८)

Guru's son, younger or of equal age, capable of teaching, or a priest in yagna or even a spectator in yagna, should be treated with respect like Guru himself. (2:208)

उत्सादनंचगात्राणांस्नापनो-च्छिष्ट-भोजने।

नकुर्याद्-गुरुपुत्रस्यपादयोश्च-अवनेजनम्॥ (२:२०९)

But the disciple should not do the following to the Guru's son: massaging of body, bathing, eating remnants of his eaten food, washing his feet. (2:209)

अभ्यञ्जनंस्नापनंचगात्रो-त्सादनमेवच।

गुरुपत्न्यानकार्याणिकेशानांचप्रसाधनम्॥ (२:२११)

The disciple should not do the following to the wife of Guru: oil-application, bathing, massaging of body, decorating hair (and body) (with flowers, sandal-paste etc.) (2:211)

गुरुपत्नीतुयुवतिर्-नाभिवाद्येहपादयोः।

पूर्णविंशति-वर्षेणगुणदोषौविजानता॥ (२:२१२)

If the wife of Guru is young, the disciple should not touch her feet while paying obeisance, if he is more than twenty years of age and knows the dharma of merit and demerit. (2:212)

यथाखनन्-खनित्रेणनरोवार्-यधिगच्छति।

तथागुरुगतांविद्यांशुश्रूषुर्-अधिगच्छति॥ (२:२१८)

Just as a person digging the ground with a spade ultimately finds water, the disciple, who diligently serves his Guru, attains the knowledge present in the Guru. (2:218)

यस्यवाङ्मनसीशुद्धेसम्यग्गुप्तेचसर्वदा।

सवैसर्वम्-अवाप्नोतिवेदान्त-उपगतंफलम्॥ (२:१६०)

One, whose speech and mind are pure and always well under control, attains all fruit expected of Vedanta. (2:160)

नपूर्वंगुरवेकिंचिद्-उपकुर्वीतधर्मवित्।

स्नास्यंस्तुगुरुणाऽज्ञप्तःशक्त्यागुर्वर्थम्-आहरेत्॥ (२:२४५)

Before his completion of studies (and leaving Gurukula), the brahmachari, who knows dharma, may not offer anything to the Guru. However, after completion of studies, he should fetch (even by begging from the rich) offerings for the Guru, as instructed by him and according to the disciple's capacity. (2:245)

क्षेत्रंहिरण्यंगाम्-अश्वंछत्र्-ओपाहनम्-आसनम्।

धान्यंशाकंचवासांसिगुरवेप्रीतिम्-आवहेत्॥ (२:२४६)

Land, gold, cow, horse, umbrella, footwear, seat, foodgrains, vegetables and clothes should be offered to the Guru, as would please him. (2:246)

5. Serving Parents and Guru

आचार्योब्रह्मणोमूर्तिःपितामूर्तिःप्रजापतेः।

मातापृथिव्यामूर्तिस्तुभ्रातास्वोमूर्तिर्-आत्मनः॥(२:२२६)

Acharya is verily the image of Brahman, father that of Prajapati (Brahma), mother that of Earth and brother is one's own Self. (2:226)

यंमाता-पितरौक्लेशंसहेतेसंभवेनृणाम्।

नतस्यनिष्कृतिःशक्याकर्तुंवर्षशतैरपि॥ (२:२२७)

The misery endured by mother and father during birth and bringing up of child can never be repaid by him even in hundreds of years (births). (2:227)

तयोर्-नित्यंप्रियंकुर्याद्-आचार्यस्यचसर्वदा।

तेष्वेवत्रिषुतुष्टेषुतपःसर्वंसमाप्यते॥ (२:२२८)

Father, mother and Acharya should always be propitiated. When these three are pleased, all the austerities culminate fruitfully. (2:228)

तेषांत्रयाणांशुश्रूषापरमंतपउच्यते।

नतैर्-अभ्यननुज्ञातोधर्मम्-अन्यंसमाचरेत्॥ (२:२२९)

The service of these three persons is said to be the highest penance. Without their permission no other dharma should be practised. (2:229)

तएवहित्रयोलोकास्-तएवत्रयआश्रमाः।

तएवहित्रयोवेदास्-तएवोक्तास्-त्रयोऽग्नयः॥ (२:२३०)

These three are said to be the three worlds, the three Asramas (Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa), the three Vedas and the three Agnis (Garhapatya, Dakshina and Ahavaniya). (2:230)

त्रिष्-वप्रमाद्यन्-नेतेषुत्रींल्लोकान्-विजयेद्-गृही।

दीप्यमानःस्ववपुषादेववद्-दिविमोदते॥ (२:२३२)

By serving these three with no negligence, the grihastha (and brahmachari) will win all three worlds. His form shining brilliantly, he will enjoy happiness in Swarga like a Deva. (2:232)

इमंलोकंमातृ-भक्त्यापितृ-भक्त्यातुमध्यमम्।

गुरुशुश्रूषयात्वेवंब्रह्मलोकंसमश्नुते॥ (२:२३३)

With devotion to mother, he enjoys this world; with devotion to father, he attains the intermediate region; with service to Guru, he attains the world of Brahma. (2:233)

सर्वेतस्यादृताधर्मायस्यैतेत्रयआदृताः।

अनादृतास्तुयस्यैतेसर्वास्-तस्याफलाःक्रियाः॥ (२:२३४)

By one, who has treated these three with respect, all dharmas have been observed. In the case of one, who has not treated them with respect, all his actions do not bear any fruit. (2:234)

यावत्-त्रयस्तेजीवेयुस्-तावन्-नान्यंसमाचरेत्।

तेष्वेवनित्यंशुश्रूषांकुर्यात्-प्रियहितेरतः॥ (२:२३५)

During the lifetime of these three, the son shall not practise any other special dharma (without their permission). He should always serve them, being intent on what is pleasing and good for them. (2:235)

तेषाम्-अनुपरोधेनपारत्र्यंयद्यदाचरेत्।

तत्तन्-निवेदयेत्-तेभ्योमनो-वचन-कर्मभिः॥ (२:२३६)

Whatever he does with mind, speech and actions for good in the next world, without hindering service to them (and with their permission), he should apprise them of those acts on completion. (2:236)

आचार्येतुखलुप्रेतेगुरुपुत्रेगुणान्विते।

गुरुदारेसपिण्डेवागुरुवद्-वृत्तिम्-आचरेत्॥ (२:२४७)

If the Acharya expires, the disciple should pay obeisance to the Guru's son, if virtuous, Guru's wife or his relative (like uncle), as if to the Guru. (This rule applies specially to the life-long brahmachari, staying in Gurukula. (2:247)

6. Honouring Elders

ऊर्ध्वंप्राणाह्य्-उत्क्रामन्तियूनःस्थविरआयति।

प्रत्युत्थान-अभिवादाभ्यांपुनस्-तान्-प्रतिपद्यते॥ (२:१२०)

On the arrival of a person, senior in age or learning, the vital airs of the junior (who is seated) tend to go up and leave the body. He gets back the vital airs by standing up and paying obeisance to the senior. (2:120)

अभिवादन-शीलस्यनित्यंवृद्ध-उपसेविनः।

चत्वारितस्यवर्धन्तेआयुर्-विद्यायशोबलम्॥ (२:१२१)

The lifespan, learning, fame and strength - these four - of one, who is given to paying respects to and serving elders, grow well. (2:121)

अभिवादयेद्-वृद्धांश्चदद्याच्-चैवासनंस्वकम्।

कृताञ्जलिर्-उतासीतगच्छतःपृष्ठतोऽन्वियात्॥ (४:१५४)

One should pay obeisance to elders (who visit him) and offer his seat to them; he should sit close to them with folded hands and follow them behind when they leave. (4:154)

मातृष्वसामातुलानीश्वश्रूरथपितृष्वसा।

संपूज्यागुरुपत्नीवत्-समास्तागुरुभार्यया॥ (२:१३१)

The sister of one's mother, wife of maternal uncle, mothers-in-law and sister of father should all be adored by way of standing up and paying obeisance, similar to the wife of Guru. (2:131)

पितुर्-भगिन्यांमातुश्चज्यायस्यांचस्वसर्यपि।

मातृवद्-वृत्तिम्-आतिष्ठेन्-माताताभ्योगरीयसी (२:१३३)

The sisters of one's father and mother and one's own elder sister should all be treated like one's own mother. However, of them all, mother is supreme. (2:133)

दशाब्दाख्यंपौरसख्यंपञ्चाब्दाख्यंकलाभृताम्।

त्र्यब्दपूर्वंश्रोत्रियाणांस्वल्पेनापिस्वयोनिषु॥ (२:१३४)

A person living together in the same city for ten years is to be treated like a friend. Artists known for five years, Srotriyas (brahmanas versed in Vedas) for three years and blood relations even for a short time are also like friends. (2:134)

वित्तंबन्धुर्-वयःकर्मविद्याभवतिपञ्चमी।

एतानिमान्यस्थानानिगरीयोयद्यद्-उत्तरम्॥ (२:१३६)

Wealth, relative, seniority in age, superiority in action and higher learning are all to be honoured. Of these, the latter shall be regarded as superior to the former. (2:136)

7. Honour & Status of Women

पितारक्षतिकौमारेभर्तारक्षतियौवने।

रक्षन्तिस्थविरेपुत्रानस्त्रीस्वातन्त्र्यं-अर्हति॥ (९:३)

The father protects a woman in her childhood till she is married; husband protects her in youth after marriage; sons protect her in old age; woman should not be allowed freedom. (9:3)

नोद्वहेत्-कपिलांकन्यांनाधिकाङ्गींनरोगिणीम्।

नालोमिकांनातिलोमांनवाचाटांनपिंगलाम्॥ (३:८)

One should not marry a bride who: is grey-haired, has extra limbs, is diseased, has no hair or too much of hair on the body, is too loquacious and yellow-eyed. (3:8)

नर्क्ष-वृक्ष-नदी-नाम्नींनान्त्य-पर्वत-नामिकाम्।

नपक्ष्यहि-प्रेष्य-नाम्नींनचभीषण-नामिकाम्॥ (३:९)

The girl should not bear names of stars, trees, rivers, ill-cultured, mountains, birds, serpents, servants, nor terrifying names. (3:9)

अव्यङ्गाङ्गींसौम्य-नाम्नींहंस-वारण-गामिनीम्।

तनु-लोम-केश-दशनांमृद्वङ्गीं-उद्वहेत्-स्त्रियम्॥ (३:१०)

One should marry a girl, free from handicaps, having pleasing name, attractive gait of swan and elephant, thin hair on body and head and thin teeth and soft limbs. (3:10)

पाणि-ग्रहणिकामन्त्रानियतेदार-लक्षणम्।

तेषांनिष्ठातुविज्ञेयाविद्वद्भिःसप्तमेपदे॥ (८:२२७)

The mantras of 'Panigrahana' determine the attainment of status of wife. These mantras are defined by Vedic scholars to culminate in 'Saptapadi' (which alone finally confers the status of wife on the woman). (8:227)

स्त्री-धनानितुयेमोहाद्-उपजीवन्तिबान्धवाः।

नारीयानानिवस्त्रंवातेपापायान्त्-यधोगतिम्॥ (३:५२)

Those relatives, who usurp by delusion of mind, the riches brought by the bride including the girl herself, vehicles, clothes etc. are sinners, who attain to miserable state. (3:52)

पितृभिर्-भ्रातृभिश्-चैताःपतिभिर्-देवरैस्-तथा।

पूज्याभूषयितव्याश्चबहु-कल्याणम्-ईप्सुभिः॥ (३:५५)

Father, brothers, husband and brothers-in-law should all honour and offer ornaments to the bride, if they are desirous of good prosperity. (3:55)

यत्रनार्यस्तुपूज्यन्तेरमन्तेतत्रदेवताः।

यत्रैतास्तुनपूज्यन्तेसर्वास्-तत्र-अफलाःक्रियाः॥ (३:५६)

The gods rejoice in the homes where women are honoured. Where they are not honoured, all rites (including Vedic yagas) are fruitless. (3:56)

शोचन्तिजामयोयत्रविनश्यत्-याशुतत्कुलम्।

नशोचन्तितुयत्रैतावर्धतेतद्धिसर्वदा॥ (३:५७)

Where women- wife, married sister or daughter, daughter-in-law etc.- are made to grieve, that family perishes quickly. Where they do not grieve, that family always prospers in all ways. (3:57)

जामयोयानिगेहानिशपन्त्य्-अप्रतिपूजिताः।

तानिकृत्य्-आहतानीवविनश्यन्तिसमन्ततः॥ (३:५८)

In homes where the aforesaid women are not honoured and hence they curse, those homes perish in all ways as if struck by black magic. (3:58)

तस्माद्-एताःसदापूज्याभूषण-आच्छादन-अशनैः।

भूति-कामैर्-नरैर्-नित्यंसत्कारेषु-उत्सवेषुच॥ (३:५९)

Hence these women should always be honoured with ornaments, dresses, feast etc., particularly during festivals and religious celebrations, by men, desirous of prosperity. (3:59)

सन्तुष्टोभार्ययाभर्ताभर्त्राभार्यातथैवच।

यस्मिन्नेवकुलेनित्यंकल्याणंतत्रवैध्रुवम्॥ (३:६०)

The entire family, where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband, will surely be attended always by happiness and prosperity. (3:60)

बालयावायुवत्यावावृद्धयावापियोषिता।

नस्वातन्त्र्येणकर्तव्यंकिञ्चित्-कार्यंगृहेष्वपि॥ (५:१४७)

A female, be she a child, youth or old, should not be allowed to perform any activity independently even at home. (5:147)

बाल्येपितुर्वशेतिष्ठेत्-पाणि-ग्राहस्ययौवने।

पुत्राणांभर्तरिप्रेतेनभजेत्-स्त्रीस्वतन्त्रताम्॥ (५:१४८)

In childhood, a female should remain under the control of her father; in youth, her husband; when the husband dies, she must be under the control of her sons. She should not be allowed independence. (5:148)

सदाप्रहृष्टयाभाव्यंगृहकार्येषुदक्षया।

सुसंस्कृतो-पस्करयाव्ययेचामुक्त-हस्तया॥ (५:१५०)

The woman should always be cheerful and perform household tasks efficiently. She should maintain household articles clean and well-organised. While spending, she should not be extravagant.

नास्तिस्त्रीणांपृथग्-यग्ज्ञोनव्रतंनाप्य्-उपोषणम्।

पतिंशुश्रूषतेयेनतेनस्वर्गेमहीयते॥ (५:१५५)

For women no separate yagna, vrata (ritual vow) or fast is prescribed. By serving her husband well she is adored in Swarga. (5:155)

व्यभिचारात्तुभर्तुःस्त्रीलोकेप्राप्नोतिनिन्द्यताम्।

शृगाल-योनिंप्राप्नोतिपाप-रोगैश्चपीड्यते॥ (५:१६४)

A woman, cohabiting with someone other than her husband, is vilified in this world and suffers from miserable diseases of sin; she is reborn as a jackal. (5:164)

स्वांप्रसूतिंचरित्रंचकुलं-आत्मानं-एवच।

स्वंचधर्मंप्रयत्नेनजायांरक्षन्हिरक्षति॥ (९:७)

One, who safeguards his wife with care, protects automatically his children, character, lineage, himself and his dharma. (9:7)

पतिर्-भार्यांसंप्रविश्यगर्भोभूत्वेहजायते।

जायायास्-तद्धिजायात्वंयदस्यांजायतेपुनः॥ (९:८)

The husband enters into his wife, becomes embryo and is born as a child. The wife is known as ‘Jaaya’ as the husband is thus reborn from her. (9:8)

उत्पादनं-अपत्यस्यजातस्यपरिपालनम्।

प्रत्यहंलोक-यात्रायाःप्रत्यक्षंस्त्रीनिबन्धनम्॥ (९:२७)

Giving birth to child, rearing the child and everyday running of the household - all these depend only on woman. (9:27)

अपत्यंधर्म-कार्याणिशुश्रूषारतिर्-उत्तमा।

दाराधीनस्-तथास्वर्गःपितॄणां-आत्मनश्चह॥ (९:२८)

Producing children, observing all requirements of dharma, service, superior sexual pleasure and ensuring attainment of Swarga by the Pitrus and himself- all these are dependent on wife. (9:28)

पतिंयानाभिचरतिमनो-वाग्-देह-संयता।

साभर्तृ-लोकान्-आप्नोतिसद्भिःसाध्वीतिचोच्यते॥ (९:२९)

A woman, who never crosses the will of her husband and keeps her mind, speech and body always under control, attains the meritorious worlds of her husband; here too, she is hailed as ‘sadhvi’ (noble woman) by virtuous people. (9:29)

भ्रातुर्-ज्येष्ठस्यभार्यायागुरु-पत्न्य्-अनुजस्यसा।

यवीयसस्तुयाभार्यास्नुषाज्येष्ठस्यसास्मृता॥ (९:५७)

As per sages, the wife of elder brother should be regarded by the younger brother as wife of his Guru. The wife of younger brother should similarly be regarded by the elder brother as his daughter-in-law. (9:57)

नदत्वाकस्यचित्-कन्यांपुनर्-दद्याद्-विचक्षणः।

दत्वापुनःप्रयच्छन्हिप्राप्नोतिपुरुषानृतम्॥ (९:७१)

A wise father, having promised to marry his daughter to a particular person, should not marry her to someone else. If he does so, he incurs the sin of 'purushanrutam' (falsehood). (9:71)

देवदत्तांपतिर्-भार्यांविन्दतेनेच्छयात्मनः।

तांसाध्वींविभृयान्-नित्यंदेवानांप्रियं-आचरन्॥ (९:९५)

One gets wife not by his own will, but as gift from the gods. He should take care of that noble woman and thus carry out the wishes of the gods. (9:95)

अन्योन्यस्या-व्यभिचारोभवेद्-आमरणान्तिकः।

एषधर्मःसमासेनज्ञेयःस्त्री-पुंसयोःपरः॥ (९:१०१)

It is the general rule of conjugal life in brief that the wife and husband follow dharma without crossing each other's will till end of their life. (9:101)

कामंतुक्षपयेद्-देहंपुष्प-मूल-फलैःशुभैः।

नतुनामापिगृह्णीयात्-पत्यौप्रेतेपरस्यतु॥ (५:१५७)

After the death of her husband, the woman should live on sacred flowers, roots and fruits, thinning down her body; she should not even utter the name of another man. (5:157)

आसीत्-आमरणात्-क्षान्तानियताब्रह्मचारिणी।

योधर्मएक-पत्नीनांकाङ्क्षन्तीतं-अनुत्तमम्॥ (५:१५८)

Till her death a widow should observe forgiveness and chastity with discipline and desire to follow the supreme rules of dedication to her dead husband's memory. (5:158)

ज्येष्ठएवतुगृह्णीयात्-पित्र्यंधनं-अशेषतः।

शेषास्-तं-उपजीवेयुर्-यथैवपितरंतथा॥ (९:१०५)

The eldest son alone shall inherit the entire parental property (on their death); the younger sons should depend on him in the same manner in which they were depending on their father so far. (9:105)

पितेवपालयेत्-पुत्रान्-ज्येष्ठोभ्रातॄन्-यवीयसः।

पुत्रवच्चापिवर्तेरन्-ज्येष्ठेभ्रातरिधर्मतः॥ (९:१०८)

The eldest son should look after his younger brothers as if they are his sons; the younger brothers should in turn look up to him as if they were his sons. (9:108)

स्वेभ्योंऽशेभ्यस्तुकन्याभ्यःप्रदद्युर्-भ्रातरःपृथक्।

स्वात्स्वादंशात्-चतुर्-भागंपतिताःस्य्-अदित्सवः॥ (९:११८)

Every brother should give a portion from their share to his sister. Any brother failing to give one-fourth of his share to his sister shall have fallen from dharma. (9:118)

अपुत्रोऽनेनविधिनासुतांकुर्वीतपुत्रिकाम्।

यदपत्यंभवेदस्यांतन्ममस्यात्-स्वधाकरम्॥ (९:१२७)

If a man has no son, he should make his daughter ‘Putrika’ at the time of marriage; he should tell his son-in-law that the son born of her will perform all his post-death ceremonies. (9:127)

अकृतावाकृतावापियंविन्देत्-सदृशात्-सुतम्।

पौत्रीमातामहस्तेनदद्यात्-पिण्डंहरेद्-धनम्॥ (९:१३६)

Whether the father makes or does not make his daughter ‘Putrika’, if the daughter gives birth to a son from her husband of the same caste, that grandson should offer ‘Pindas’ to his grandfather and inherit his property. (9:136)

पुत्रेणलोकान्-जयतिपौत्रेणा-नन्त्यं-अश्नुते।

अथपुत्रस्यपौत्रेणब्रध्नस्य्-आप्नोतिविष्टपम्॥ (९:१३७)

By virtue of having a son, a man attains upper worlds of merit; by having a grandson, he enjoys those worlds for infinite period; by having a great-grandson, he occupies the world of Surya. (9:137)

पुंनाम्नोनरकाद्-यस्मात्-त्रायतेपितरंसुतः।

तस्मात्-पुत्रइतिप्रोक्तःस्वयमेवस्वयंभुवा॥ (९:१३८)

A son rescues his father from the hell named ‘Pum’; hence Brahma himself called him ‘Putra’, (9:138)

पौत्र-दौहित्रयोर्-लोकेविशेषोनोपपद्यते।

दौहित्रोऽपिह्यमुत्रैनंसन्तारयतिपौत्रवत्॥ (९:१३९)

There is no difference between the son of daughter and son’s son; the daughter’s son also enables his mother’s father to attain meritorious world, like a son’s son would. (9:139)

यादृशंफलं-आप्नोतिकुप्लवैःसंतरन्-जलम्।

तादृशंफलं-आप्नोतिकुपुत्रैःसन्तरंस्-तमः॥ (९:१६१)

Just as a person, who tries to cross waters sitting in a damaged boat, miserably fails, one cannot cross the ocean of darkness through unworthy sons. 9:169)

भ्रातृणां-एकजातानां-एकश्चेत्-पुत्रवान्-भवेत्।

सर्वांस्-तांस्-तेनपुत्रेणपुत्रिणोमनुर्-अब्रवीत्॥ (९:१८२)

If there are many brothers born from same parents and only one out of them has a son, all the brothers will be deemed to have son; so said Manu. (9:182)

8. Grihasthasrama

चतुर्थं-आयुषोभागं-उषित्वाद्यंगुरौद्विजः।

द्वितीयं-आयुषोभागंकृतदारोगृहेवसेत्॥ (४:१)

After completing the first quarter of life in the hermitage of Guru, one should spend the second quarter in his home after marrying and along with his wife. (4:1)

अग्नौप्रास्ताहुतिःसम्यग्-आदित्यं-उपतिष्ठते।

आदित्याज्-जायतेवृष्टिर्-वृष्टेर्-अन्नंततःप्रजाः॥ (३:७६)

Oblation, properly offered in fire, attains to Sun; rains are born of Sun; food is born of rains; from food are born living beings. (3:76)

यथावायुंसमाश्रित्यवर्तन्तेसर्व-जन्तवः।

तथागृहस्थम्-आश्रित्यवर्तन्तेसर्वआश्रमाः॥ (३:७७)

Just as all living beings exist dependent on air (Prana), people of all Asramas depend on Grihastha (Householder) for their existence. (3:77)

यस्मात्-त्रयोऽप्य्-आश्रमिणोज्ञानेनान्नेनचान्वहम्।

गृहस्थेनैवधार्यन्तेतस्माज्-ज्येष्ठाश्रमोगृही॥ (३:७८)

As all the three Asramas (Brahmachari, Vanaprastha and Sanyasi) are supported by Grihastha alone through knowledge and food, Grihasthasrama is the seniormost Asrama. (3:78)

तृणानिभूमिर्-उदकंवाक्-चतुर्थीचसूनृता।

एतान्यपिसतांगेहेनोच्छिद्यन्तेकदाचन॥ (३:१०१)

Grass (as bed), ground (for rest), water, and kind words - these are never unavailable in the homes of the virtuous. (3:101)

उपासतेयेगृहस्थाःपरपाकं-अबुद्धयः।

तेनतेप्रेत्यपशुतांव्रजन्त्य्-अन्नादि-दायिनाम्॥ (३:१०४)

The householders, who enjoy food in others' homes out of foolishness (unnecessarily with no occasion), attain to the state of animals in the homes of those providers of food etc. in their next birth. (3:104)

अप्रणोद्योऽतिथिःसायंसूर्योढोगृहमेधिना।

कालेप्राप्तस्त्वकालेवानास्यानश्नन्-गृहेवसेत्॥ (३:१०५)

A householder should not fail to entertain a guest even if he comes after sunset. Whether the guest arrives in time or late, he should never be permitted to stay without food. (3:105)

आसन-अशन-शय्याभिर्-अद्भिर्-मूल-फलेनवा।

नास्यकश्चिद्-वसेद्-गेहेशक्तितोऽनर्चितोऽतिथिः॥ (४:२९)

In any household no guest should remain unentertained with seat, food, bed, water, roots and fruits (at least) according to one's capacity. (4:29)

पाषण्डिनोविकर्मस्थान्-बैडाल-व्रतिकान्-शठान्।

हैतुकान्-बकवृत्तींश्चवाङ्मात्रेणापिनार्चयेत्।। (४:३०)

Those who have their guise like followers of Vedic dharma, but are in reality opposed to Vedas; those earning their livelihood by prohibited deeds; greedy and harmful people (like cat); those who are showy and have no faith in Vedas; logicians opposed to Vedas; selfish and apparently humble people (like duck) - these types of persons should not be entertained even with good words. (4:30)

नवैस्वयंतद्-अश्नीयाद्-अतिथिंयन्नभोजयेत्।

धन्यंयशस्यं-आयुष्यंस्वर्ग्यंवातिथि-पूजनम्॥ (३:१०६)

A householder should not himself consume food, which has not been served to the guest. Entertaining guest respectfully leads to attainment of wealth, fame, long life and also heaven. (3:106)

सुवासिनीकुमारीश्चरोगिणोगर्भिणीःस्त्रियः।

अतिथिभ्योऽग्रएवैतान्-भोजयेद्-अविचारयन्॥ (३:११४)

Newly married women (daughters, daughters-in-law), unmarried girls, sick persons, pregnant women - these should be fed prior to the guests without second thoughts. (3:114)

अदत्वातुयएतेभ्यःपूर्वंभुङ्क्तेऽविचक्षणः।

सभुञ्जानोनजानातिश्व-गृध्रैर्-जग्धिम्-आत्मनः॥ (३:११५)

One, who takes food before serving the guests without application of intellect, becomes the food for dogs and vultures in his next life. (3:115)

देवान्-ऋषीन्-मनुष्यांश्चपितॄन्-गृह्याश्चदेवताः।

पूजयित्वाततःपश्चाद्-गृहस्थःशेष-भुग्-भवेत्॥ (३:११७)

Only after worshipping Devas, Rishis, guests, Pitrus and family gods, the householder should consume the left-over food. (3:117)

देवता-अतिथि-भृत्यानांपितॄणाम्-आत्मनश्चयः।

ननिर्वपतिपञ्चानां-उच्छ्वसन्-नसजीवति॥ (३:७२)

One, who fails to feed and nourish these five - Devatas, guests, dependents, manes and himself - , though breathing, is as good as dead. (3:72)

धर्मेणचद्रव्य-वृद्धा-वातिष्ठेद्-यत्नं-उत्तमम्।

दद्याच्चसर्व-भूतानां-अन्नमेवप्रयत्नतः॥ (९:३३३)

A businessman should put in his best efforts in multiplying wealth through righteous means. He should take care to distribute food among all beings, food being the most important sustenance. (9:333)

9. Living and Travel

नैकःसुप्यात्-शून्यगेहेश्रेयांसंनप्रबोधयेत्।

नोदक्यया-भिभाषेतयज्ञंगच्छेन्-नचावृतः॥ (४:५७)

One should not sleep in an empty house, wake up a person elderly or senior in learning etc., converse with a woman in her menses period, nor go to yagna uninvited (for acting as priest). (4:57)

नाधार्मिकेवसेद्-ग्रामेनव्याधि-बहुलेभृशम्।

नैकःप्रपद्येता-ध्वानंनचिरंपर्वतेवसेत्॥ (४:६०)

One should not live in a village of people of Adharma, nor overrun by many diseases. One should not travel on a path alone, nor live on a mountain for long. (4:60)

नाभिनीतैर्-व्रजेद्-धुर्यैर्-नचक्षुद्-व्याधि-पीडितैः।

नभिन्न-शृङ्गाक्षि-खुरैर्-नवालधिविरूपितैः॥ (४:६७)

One should not travel in a cart drawn by animals (horse, bull etc.), not tamed, or suffering from hunger or disease, or with broken horns, defective eyes, improper hooves or damaged tail. (4:67)

विनीतैस्तुव्रजेन्-नित्यं-आशुगैर्-लक्षणा-न्वितः।

वर्ण-रूपोप-संपन्नैःप्रतोदेनातुदन्-भृशम्॥ (४:६८)

One should always travel in carts drawn by animals, which are obedient, fast-moving, having all auspicious marks, good-looking with agreeable colour and without flogging them much. (4:68)

नातिकल्यंनातिसायंनातिमध्यंदिनेस्थिते।

नाज्ञातेनसमंगच्छेन्-नैकोनवृषलैःसह॥ (४:१४०)

One should not travel anywhere alone very early in the morning, late in the evening or during midday and also not along with strangers and ill-cultured people. (4:140)

देवतानांगुरोराज्ञःस्नातक-आचार्ययोस्तथा।

नाक्रमेत्-कामतश्-छायांबभ्रुणोदीक्षितस्यच॥ (४:१३०)

One should not knowingly cross the shadow of a godly image, Guru, king, teacher, a tawny-complexioned person and a person officiating in a yagna. (4:130)

उद्वर्तनं-अपस्नानंविण्मूत्रेरक्तमेवच।

श्लेष्म-निष्ठ्यूत-वान्तानिनाधितिष्ठेत्तुकामतः॥ (४: १३२)

One should not knowingly tread over the refuse of anointment, bath water, excreta and urine, blood, phlegm, sputum and vomited material. (4:132)

अद्वारेणचनातीयाद्-ग्रामंवावेश्मवावृतम्।

रात्रौचवृक्ष-मूलानिदूरतःपरिवर्जयेत्॥ (४:७३)

If a village or house is protected with a barrier, one should not enter through any place other than the gate. During night one should avoid bases of trees from a distance. (4:73)

अचक्षुर्-विषयंदुर्गंनप्रपद्येतकर्हिचित्।

नविण्मूत्रं-उदीक्षेतनबाहुभ्यांनदींतरेत्॥ (४:७७)

One should never pass through a place, where vision fails. One should not look at stools and urine. One should not cross a river with his hands (by swimming). (4:77)

चक्रिणोदशमीस्थस्यरोगिणोभारिणःस्त्रियाः।

स्नातकस्यचराज्ञश्चपन्थादेयोवरस्यच॥ (२:१३८)

Preference in path shall be allowed for one seated in chariot, one in nineties, diseased, person carrying heavy weight , women, brahmachari returning from Gurukula after completing Vedic study, the ruler and bridegroom on way to marriage. (2:138)

10. Rules of Daily Routine

ब्राह्मेमुहूर्तेबुध्येतधर्मार्थौचानुचिंतयेत्।

कायक्लेशांश्चतन्मूलान्-वेद-तत्वार्थमेवच॥ (४:९२)

One should wake up in the last part of the night and contemplate on Dharma and Artha (wealth) (the two Purusharthas, objectives of human life). He should also consider the bodily and mental misery (to be experienced in pursuit of these Purusharthas) and meditate on the essence of Vedic knowledge. (4:92)

नान्नं-अद्याद्-एकवासानननग्नःस्नानं-आचरेत्।

नमूत्रंपथिकुर्वीतनभस्मनिनगोव्रजे॥ (४:४५)

One should not eat food wearing only one cloth. One should not take bath in naked condition. One should not pass urine (and excreta) on a public path, ashes or in cowpen. (4:45)

नफालकृष्टेनजलेनचित्यांनचपर्वते।

नजीर्ण-देवायतनेनवल्मीकेकदाचन॥ (४:४६)

One should also never pass urine and excreta in a ploughed field, in water, in a kiln, on a mountain, in an old temple or in an ant-hill. (4:46)

नससत्वेषुगर्तेषुनगच्छन्नापिचस्थितः।

ननदी-तीरं-आसाद्यनचपर्वत-मस्तके॥ (४:४७)

One should also not pass urine and excreta in ditches where living beings might exist, nor while walking or standing, nor on reaching the bank of river or peak of mountain. (4:47)

मैत्रंप्रसाधनंस्नानंदन्त-धावनं-अञ्जनम्।

पूर्वाह्नएवकुर्वीतदेवतानांचपूजनम्॥ (४:१५२)

Answering call of nature, bodily makeup (haircut etc.), bath, brushing teeth, worship of Gods - all these should be done in the early morning. (4:152)

नस्नानं-आचरेद्-भुक्त्वानातुरोनमहानिशि।

नवासोभिःसहाजस्रंनाविज्ञातेजलाशये॥ (४:१२९)

Bath should not be taken after eating food, in state of sickness (bath excluding the head is recommended where possible), in dead of night (9 pm to 3 am), with too much of clothing or in unknown water-body (in view of possible dangers from crocodiles etc.) (4:129)

परकीय-निपानेषुनस्नायाच्चकदाचन।

निपानकर्तुःस्नात्वातुदुष्कृतांशेनलिप्यते॥ (४:२०१)

One should never take bath in a water-body created by someone else, as that would attach him to a share (one-fourth) of the sins committed by the maker of the reservoir. (4:201)

नदीषुदेवखातेषुतडागेषुसरस्सुच।

स्नानंसमाचरेन्-नित्यंगर्त-प्रस्रवणेषुच॥ (४:२०३)

One should always take bath in rivers (particularly those joining the sea), ponds associated with Gods, tanks and lakes, in waterfalls and in pits. (4:203)

नाग्निंमुखेन-उपधमेन्-नग्नांनेक्षेतचस्त्रियम्।

नामेध्यंप्रक्षिपेद्-अग्नौनचपादौप्रतापयेत्॥ (४:५३)

One should not put off fire with mouth, look at a naked woman, deposit in fire impure things, warm up by showing feet to the fire. (4:53)

अधस्तान्-नोपदध्याच्चनचैनं-अभिलंघयेत्।

नचैनंपादतःकुर्यान्-नप्राणा-बाधं-आचरेत्॥ (४:५४)

One should not keep fire underneath his body (cot, seat etc.), cross the fire, keep the fire on the side of the leg and do anything endangering his life. (4:54)

नाश्नीयात्-संधि-वेलायांनगच्छेन्-नापिसंविशेत्।

नचैवप्रलिखेद्-भूमिंनात्मन-उपहरेत्-स्रजम्॥ (४:५५)

In the time of twilight one should not take food, nor go to another place and nor sleep. One should not scratch the ground, nor take off garland himself from his body. (4:55)

नाप्सुमूत्रंपुरीषंवाष्ठीवनंवासमुत्सृजेत्।

अमेध्य-लिप्तं-अन्यद्वालोहितंवाविषाणिवा॥ (४:५६)

One should not throw urine, excreta, sputum, anything impure, blood or poison in water. (4:56)

आयुष्यंप्राङ्मुखोभुङ्क्तेयशस्यंदक्षिणामुखः।

श्रियंप्रत्यङ्मुखोभुङ्क्तेऋतंभुङ्क्तेह्युदङ्मुखः॥ (२:५२)

One, who is desirous of long life, should have his meal facing east; one who desires fame should face south; one who desires wealth should face west; one who desires truth and harmony shall face north. (2:52)

पूजयेद्-अशनंनित्यं-अद्याच्चैतद्-अकुत्सयन्।

दृष्ट्वाहृष्येत्-प्रसीदेच्चप्रतिनन्देच्चसर्वशः॥ (२:५४)

One shall always worship the food he gets and partake it without finding fault. On seeing food one shall feel happy, offer respects and pray that this source of sustenance of Prana shall always be available. (2:54)

पूजितंह्यशनंनित्यंबल-मूर्जंचयच्छति।

अपूजितंतुतद्-भुक्तं-उभयंनाशयेद्-इदम्॥ (२:५५)

Food, which is worshipped, always bestows strength and energy. Food, if eaten without worship, destroys them both. (2:55)

नोच्छिष्टंकस्यचिद्-दद्यान्-नाद्याच्चैवतथान्तरा।

नचैवात्यशनंकुर्यान्नचोच्छिष्टःक्वचिद्-व्रजेत्॥ (२:५६)

One should not give remnants of eaten food to anyone. One should not eat between meals (the two meals eaten in morning and evening). Overeating should not be done. One should not go anywhere without washing properly after meal. (2:56)

अनारोग्यं-अनायुष्यं-अस्वर्ग्यंच-अतिभोजनम्।

अपुण्यंलोक-विद्विष्टंतस्मात्-तत्-परिवर्जयेत्॥ (२:५७)

Excessive eating is unhealthy and opposed to longevity and religious merit and is condemned by people. Hence that should be shunned. (2:57)

नभुञ्जीत-उद्धृतस्नेहंनातिसौहित्यं-आचरेत्।

नातिप्रगेनातिसायंनसायंप्रातर्-आशितः॥ (४:६२)

Neither food, left after extracting juice, oil etc., nor food to full satiety should be consumed. Food should not be taken early in the morning, or late in the evening. Having taken food to full satiety in the morning, one should not take food in the evening. (4:62)

मत्त-क्रुद्ध-आतुराणांचनभुञ्जीतकदाचन।

केश-कीटावपन्नंचपदास्पृष्टंचकामतः॥ (४:२०७)

Food offered by persons in a state of intoxication, anger and disease should never be eaten. Also food, contaminated by hair and worms and want only touched by feet should never be consumed. (4:207)

नपादौधावयेत्-कांस्येकदाचिदपिभाजने।

नभिन्न-भाण्डेभुञ्जीतनभाव-प्रतिदूषिते॥ (४:६५)

One should never wash his feet in a vessel made of lead. One should not take food in a broken plate (unless made of copper, silver or gold), nor in a place causing aversion in the mind. (4:65)

बालातपःप्रेत-धूमोवर्ज्यंभिन्नंतथासनम्।

नछिन्द्यान्-नख-लोमानिदन्तैर्-नोत्पाटयेन्-नखान्॥ (४:६९)

Early morning Sun, smoke from funeral pyre and broken seat should be avoided. Nails and hair should not be cut (outside of restricted time and manner). Nails should not be cut off with teeth. (4:69)

नमृल्लोष्ठंचमृद्-नीयान्-नच्छिन्द्यात्-करजैस्-तृणम्।

नकर्मनिष्फलंकुर्यान्-नायत्या-असुखोदयम्॥ (४:७०)

Earthen lump should not be moulded with hands (unnecessarily); Grass should not be cut with nails. Fruitless action should not be done. Action causing pain in future should also not be done.

लोष्ठ-मर्दीतृण-च्छेदीनख-खादीचयोनरः।

सविनाशंव्रजत्-याशुसूचकोऽशुचिरेवच॥ (४:७१)

One, who presses clay, cuts grass, eats nails, tells tales of others’ ignominy or is impure in body and mind, meets with destruction very fast. (4:71)

नाक्षैःक्रीडेत्-कदाचित्तुस्वयंनोपानहौहरेत्।

शयनस्थोनभुञ्जीतनपाणिस्थंनचासने॥ (४:७४)

Except in a wager, one should never play with dice even for fun. One should not carry his footwear himself in his hands. One should not eat while in bed, nor hold food in hand and eat it, nor place the plate on a seat and eat the food. (4:74)

सर्वंचतिल-संबद्धंनाद्याद्-अस्तमितेरवौ।

नचनग्नःशयीतेहनचोच्छिष्टःक्वचिद्-व्रजेत्॥ (४:७५)

Food with gingili content should not be consumed after sunset. One should not sleep in nude condition. One should not go out anywhere after food without washing. (4:75)

आर्द्र-पादस्तुभुञ्जीतनार्द्र-पादस्तुसंविशेत्।

आर्द्र-पादस्तुभुञ्जानोदीर्घं-आयुर्-अवाप्नुयात्॥ (४:७६)

One should eat food with feet wet. One should not go to bed with feet wet. One, who eats food with wet feet, will attain long life. (4:76)

अधितिष्ठेन्नकेशांस्तुनभस्म-अस्थि-कपालिकाः।

नकार्पासास्थिनतुषान्-दीर्घं-आयुर्-जिजीविषुः॥ (४:७८)

A person desiring long life should not sit over hair, ashes, bones, broken earthen vessels, cotton seeds and chaff of foodgrains. (4:78)

नसंहताभ्यांपाणिभ्यांकण्डूयेद्-आत्मनःशिरः।

नस्पृशेत्-चैतद्-उच्छिष्टोनचस्नायाद्-विनाततः॥ (४:८२)

One should not scratch his head with both hands, nor should one touch the head while eating or before washing after food. One should not take bath without washing the head (if healthy). (4:82)

केश-ग्रहान्-प्रहारांश्चशिरस्येतान्-विवर्जयेत्।

शिरःस्नातश्चतैलेननाङ्गंकिञ्चिदपिस्पृशेत्॥ (४:८३)

One should not catch the hair or strike at the head of anybody. Having taken oil-bath, one should not touch any part of the body with oil. (4:83)

11. Virtuous Conduct

श्रुति-स्मृत्-युदितंसम्यङ्-निबद्धंस्वेषुकर्मसु।

धर्ममूलंनिषेवेतसदाचारं-अतन्द्रितः॥ (४:१५५)

One should practise with full effort, virtuous conduct, which is the basis of dharma, as enunciated in Srutis (Vedas) and Smritis (Sastras), as applicable to him. (4:155)

आचाराल्-लभतेह्यायुर्-आचाराद्-ईप्सिताःप्रजाः।

आचाराद्-धनं-अक्षय्यं-आचारोहन्त्य्-अलक्षणम्॥ (४:१५६)

Good conduct bestows long life, desired progeny and inexhaustible wealth; it also destroys inauspicious signs. (4:156)

दुराचारोहिपुरुषोलोकेभवतिनिन्दितः।

दुःखभागीचसततंव्याधितोऽल्पायुरेवच॥ (४:१५७)

A person of evil conduct is always condemned by the society. He meets with misery, disease and short life. (4:157)

सर्व-लक्षण-हीनोऽपियःसदाचारवान्-नरः।

श्रद्दधानोऽनसूयश्चशतंवर्षाणिजीवति॥ (४:१५८)

Even if one is devoid of all auspicious signs, if he has good conduct, reverential faith and is free from fault-finding and jealousy, he lives for a hundred years. (4:158)

यमान्-सेवेतसततंननित्यंनियमान्-बुधः।

यमान्-पतत्य्-अकुर्वाणोनियमान्-केवलान्-भजन्॥ (४:२०४)

A wise man should observe Yamas always, even if he fails to observe Niyamas.

(Yamas are ten: compassion, forbearance, truth, non-violence, sense-control, absence of craving, meditation, peace of mind, sweetness of approach and straightforwardness.
Niyamas are ten: purity, sacrifice, austerity, charity, study of scriptures, continence, religious vow, abstinence from food, silence and ritual bath.)
If he observes only Niyamas and rejects Yamas, he falls down. (4:204)

यद्-यत्-परवशंकर्मतत्-तद्-यत्नेनवर्जयेत्।

यद्-यद्-आत्मवशंतुस्यात्-तत्-तत्-सेवेतयत्नतः॥ (४:१५९)

One should certainly avoid actions, which are subject to control of others. He should put in efforts to do such actions which are in his own control. (4:159)

सर्वंपरवशंदुःखंसर्वं-आत्मवशंसुखम्।

एतद्-विद्यात्-समासेनलक्षणंसुख-दुःखयोः॥ (४:१६०)

Everything, which is under the control of others, is misery. Everything, which is under one’s own control, is happiness. This should be understood as the brief definition of misery and happiness. (4:160)

यत्-कर्मकुर्वतोऽस्यस्यात्-परितोषोऽन्तरात्मनः।

तत्-प्रयत्नेनकुर्वीतविपरीतंतुवर्जयेत्॥ (४:१६१)

In doing action, which gives inner satisfaction while doing, one should put in efforts. Other actions should be avoided. (This rule is for actions not laid down as obligatory in Sastras). (4:161)

नास्तिक्यंवेदनिन्दांचदेवतानांचकुत्सनम्।

द्वेषंदंभंचमानंचक्रोधंतैक्ष्ण्यंचवर्जयेत्॥ (४:१६३)

One should refrain from atheism (belief that God and Vedas do not exist), denunciation of Vedas, blasphemy to Gods, hatred, vanity, pride, anger and harshness. (4:163)

अधार्मिकोनरोयोहियस्यचाप्य्-अनृतंधनम्।

हिंसा-रतश्चयोनित्यंनेहासौसुखं-एधते॥ (४:१७०)

One, who is ever engaged in acts in transgression of dharma, whose only wealth is falsehood (who earns his living by testifying falsely in courts etc.) and who always harms others, does not reap any happiness in this world. (4:170)

विषादप्-यमृतंग्राह्यंबालादपिसुभाषितम्।

अमित्रादपिसद्-वृत्तं-अमेध्यादपिकांचनम्॥ (२:२३९)

Nectar should be taken even from (associated) poison; wholesome words even from a child; good conduct even from an enemy; gold even from filthy object. (2:239)

मात्रास्वस्रादुहित्रावानविविक्तासनोभवेत्।

बलवान्-इन्द्रिय-ग्रामोविद्वांसमपिकर्षति। (२:२१५)

One should not sit alone even with his mother, sister or daughter; the powerful group of sense-organs overpowers even wise persons. (2:215)

नवारयेद्-गांधयन्तींनचाचक्षीतकस्यचित्।

नदिवीन्द्रायुधंदृष्ट्वाकस्यचिद्-दर्शयेद्-बुधः॥ (४:५९)

One should not disturb a cow drinking water (or milk), nor get someone to disturb it by informing him. A wise man should not show rainbow in the sky to someone after having seen it. (4:59)

नकुर्वीतवृथा-चेष्टांनवार्-यञ्जलिनापिबेत्।

नोत्सङ्गेभक्षयेत्-भक्ष्यान्-नजातुस्यात्-कुतूहली॥ (४:६३)

No wasteful effort should be undertaken; water should not be drunk from joined palms; food should not be eaten by keeping it on lap; fruitless inquisitiveness should not be undertaken. (4:63)

उपानहौचवासश्चधृतं-अन्यैर्- नधारयेत्।

उपवीतं-अलंकारंस्त्रजंकरकमेवच॥ (४:६६)

One should not use footwear, clothes, sacred thread, ornaments, garland and water-pot used by others. (4:66)

नविगर्ह्यकथांकुर्याद्-बहिर्-माल्यंनधारयेत्।

गवांचयानंपृष्ठेनसर्वथैवविगर्हितम्॥ (४:७२)

One should not talk (spiritual or mundane) with pride, nor wear garland outside of proper occasion. Travelling on the back of cow is strictly prohibited. (4:72)

वैरिणंनोपसेवेतसहायंचैववैरिणः।

अधार्मिकंतस्करंचपरस्यैवचयोषितम्॥ (४:१३३)

One should avoid the company of enemy, associate of enemy, one who transgresses dharma, thief and others' wives. (4:133)

नहीदृशं-अनायुष्यंलोकेकिंचनविद्यते।

यादृशंपुरुषस्येहपरदारोपसेवनम्॥ (४:१३४)

There is no sin in this world, which has the effect of reducing one's life-span, as enjoying woman other than one's own wife. (4:134)

परस्यदण्डंनोद्यच्छेत्-क्रुद्धोनैवनिपातयेत्।

अन्यत्रपुत्राच्-छिष्याद्वाशिष्ट्यर्थंताडयेत्-तुतौ॥ (४:१६४)

One should not raise a stick on or beat others with it in anger. However one can beat the son and disciple for disciplining them. (4:164)

नपाणि-पाद-चपलोननेत्र-चपलोनृजुः।

नस्याद्-वाक्-चपलश्चैवनपरद्रोह-कर्म-धीः॥ (४:१७७)

One should not be rash in use of hands and feet (implying acquisition of unnecessary articles and useless travel), in use of eyes (looking at prohibited things) and in use of speech (vile speech). One should not be crooked in conduct and not bent upon actions with malice to others). (4:177)

द्यूतं-एतत्-पुराकल्पेदृष्टंवैरकरंमहत्।

तस्माद्-द्यूतंनसेवेतहास्यार्थं-अपिबुद्धिमान्॥ (९:२२७)

Gambling caused great enmity in times of yore. Hence a wise man should not take to gambling even for fun. (9:227)

येनास्यपितरोयातायेनयाताःपितामहाः।

तेनयायात्-सतांमार्गंतेनगच्छन्-नरिष्यते॥ (४:१७८)

One should follow the path adopted by noble persons including his fathers and grandfathers (when confronted with apparently conflicting rules of Sastras); by doing so he avoids trouble. (4:178)

छायास्वोदास-वर्गश्चदुहिताकृपणंपरम्।

तस्माद्-एतैर्-अधिक्षिप्तःसहेतासंज्वरःसदा॥ (४:१८५)

Domestic servants, who are like one’s own shadow and his daughter are deserving of kindness. Hence, even if he is disrespected by them, he should be tolerant and be free from any ill-feeling. (4:185)

श्रद्धयेष्टंचपूर्तंचनित्यंकुर्याद्-अतन्द्रितः।

श्रद्धाकृतेह्यक्षयेतेभवतःस्वागतैर्-धनैः॥ (४:२२६)

One should always perform actively Ishta (yagna, pooja etc.) and Purtha (well, road, garden etc.) karmas. These karmas, when done with faith and with money earned through right means, lead to inexhaustible merit. (4:226)

उत्तमैर्-उत्तमैर्-नित्यंसंबन्धान्-आचरेत्-सह।

निनीषुःकुलं-उत्कर्षं-अधमान्-अधमांस्-त्यजेत्॥ (४:२४४)

One, desirous of leading his family towards higher merit, should establish his relations with nobler and nobler persons and discard the lowly ones. (4:244)

दृढकारीमृदुर्-दान्तःक्रूराचारैर्-असंवसन्।

अहिंस्रोदम-दानाभ्यांजयेत्-स्वर्गंतथा-व्रतः।। (४:२४६)

One, who fulfils his mission with firmness, is soft in approach, tolerant, shunning persons of cruel conduct and non-violent and follows the vows of sense-control and charity, conquers Swarga. (4:246)

योऽन्यथासन्तं-आत्मानं-अन्यथासत्सुभाषते।

सपापकृत्तमोलोकेस्तेनआत्मा-पहारकः॥ (४:२५५)

One, who presents himself before noble persons as one different from what he actually is, is the worst sinner in the world and robber, having robbed his own self. (4:255)

यद्धनंयज्ञशीलानांदेवस्वंयद्-विदुर्-बुधाः।

अयज्वानांतुयद्-वित्तंआसुरस्वंतद्-उच्यते॥ (११:२०)

Wise persons recognize the wealth of those who habitually perform yagnas as godly. The wealth of those who never perform yagnas is stated to be demoniacal. (11:20)

12. Truthful Speech

सत्यंब्रूयात्-प्रियंब्रूयान्-नब्रूयात्-सत्यं-अप्रियम्।

प्रियंचनानृतंब्रूयाद्-एषधर्मःसनातनः॥ (४:१३८)

One should speak truth; the truth should also be pleasing. One should not speak truth, if it is not pleasing. Also one should not speak falsehood as it would be pleasing. This is eternal dharma. (4:138)

भद्रंभद्रमितिब्रूयाद्-भद्रमित्येववावदेत्।

शुष्क-वैरंविवादंचनकुर्यात्-केनचित्-सह॥ (४:१३९)

One should communicate even unpleasant information through pleasing words. One should not enter into dry, fruitless and hostile debate with anyone. (4:139)

नारुन्तुदःस्याद्-आर्तोऽपिनपरद्रोह-कर्मधीः।

ययास्योद्विजतेवाचानालोक्यांतामुदीरयेत्॥ (२:१६१)

Though himself in misery, one should not utter harsh words, nor engage his intellect and action in harming others. He should utter words, which do not hurt others and do not become obstacles in attainment of Swarga etc. (2:161)

हीनाङ्गान्-अतिरिक्ताङ्गान्-विद्याहीनान्-वयोधिकान्।

रूप-द्रव्य-विहीनांश्चजाति-हीनांश्चनाक्षिपेत्॥ (४:१४१)

One should not use insulting words against the handicapped - with less or more limbs, the uneducated, the elderly and those lacking in appearance, wealth and culture. (4:141)

वाच्यार्थानियताःसर्वेवाङ्मूलावाङ्विनिःसृताः।

तांस्तुयद्-स्तेनयेद्-वाचंससर्व-स्तेयकृन्-नरः॥ (४:२५६)

All meanings of words are bound by, rooted in and conveyed by the respective words. One, who steals those words (uses words, not intending to convey what they mean or, indulges in double-speak), has stolen everything. (4:256)

13. Charity

दान-धर्मंनिषेवेतनित्यं-ऐष्टिक-पौर्तिकम्।

परितुष्टेनभावेनपात्रं-आसाद्य-शक्तितः॥ (४:२२७)

One should always perform the dharma of charity and Ishta (yagna, pooja etc.) and Purtha (well, road, garden etc.) dharmas to qualified and deserving persons with a sense of great happiness according to his capacity. (4:227)

यत्-किञ्चिदपिदातव्यंयाचितेना-नसूयया।

उत्पत्स्यतेहितत्-पात्रंयत्-तारयतिसर्वतः॥ (४:२२८)

Approached by anyone for charity, one should give ungrudgingly as per his capacity. When the time comes, the recipient will appear and liberate him (from hell). (4:228)

शक्तःपरजनेदातास्वजनेदुःख-जीविनि।

मध्वापातोविषास्वादःसधर्म-प्रति-रूपकः॥ (११:९)

If one is intent on giving charity to others when his own kith and kin are living a life of misery, it looks outwardly like dharma, but not true dharma, just as something that appears like honey, but tastes like poison. (11:9)

योऽसाधुभ्योऽर्थं-आदायसाधुभ्यःसंप्रयच्छति।

सकृत्वाप्लवं-आत्मानंसंतारयतितावुभौ॥ (११:१९)

One, who takes the wealth of wicked persons and distributes it among virtuous persons, thus becomes a boat for both these parties to cross the mire of the world. (11:19)

वारिदस्-तृप्तिं-आप्नोतिसुखं-अक्षय्यं-अन्नदः।

तिल-प्रदःप्रजाम्-इष्टांदीपदस्-चक्षुर्-उत्तमम्॥ (४:२२९)

The donor of water attains satisfaction (of food and water); donor of food, inexhaustible happiness; donor of gingili, desired progeny; donor of lamp, eyes with superior vision. (4:229)

भूमिदोभूमिं-आप्नोतिदीर्घं-आयुर्-हिरण्यदः।

गृहदोऽग्र्याणिवेश्मानिरूप्यदोरूपं-उत्तमम्॥ (४:२३०)

The donor of land becomes master of landed property; donor of gold gets long life; donor of house, superior mansions; donor of silver, superior appearance. (4:230)

वासोदश्-चन्द्र-सालोक्यं-अश्वि-सालोक्यं-अश्विदः।

अनडुहःश्रियंपुष्टांगोदोब्रध्नम्यविष्टपम्॥ (४:२३१)

The donor of clothes attains Chandraloka; donor of horse, world of Asvini kumaras; donor of bullock gets plenty of wealth; donor of cow attains Suryaloka. (4:231)

यान-शय्या-प्रदोभार्यां-ऐश्वर्यं-अभय-प्रदः।

धान्यदःशाश्वतंसौख्यंब्रह्मदो-ब्रह्म-सार्ष्टिदाम्॥ (४:२३२)

The donor of vehicle and bed gets good wife. Bestower of freedom from fear, lordship; donor of foodgrains, permanent comfort; teacher of Veda, status of Brahma. (4:232)

सर्वेषामेवदानानांब्रह्मदानंविशिष्यते।

वार्य्-अन्न-गो-मही-वासस्-तिल-काञ्चन-सर्पिषाम्॥ (४:२३३)

Of all gifts including water, food, cow, land, clothes, gingili and ghee, gift of knowledge of Veda is of greatest merit. (4:233)

येनयेनतुभावेनयद्-यद्-दानंप्रयच्छति।

तत्-तत्-तेनैवभावेनप्राप्नोतिप्रति-पूजितः॥ (४:२३४)

With whatever attitude one donates articles, he is honoured with the same attitude and attains the fruit of his gift in his next life. (4:234)

योऽर्चितंप्रतिगृह्णातिददात्य्-अर्चितमेवच।

तावुभौगच्छतःस्वर्गंनरकंतुविपर्यये॥ (४:२३५)

One who receives gift, duly honoured and one, who donates, duly honouring the recipient, both attain to Swarga; without due honour, both go to hell. (4:235)

योराज्ञःप्रतिगृह्णातिलुब्धस्य-उच्छास्त्र-वर्तिनः।

सपर्यायेणयातीमान्-नरकान्-एकविंशतिम्॥ (४:८७)

One, who receives charity from a greedy and unethical ruler, attains to these twentyone Narakas in succession. (4:87)

तामिस्रं-अन्धतामिस्रंमहारौरव-रौरवौ।

नरकंकालसूत्रंचमहानरकमेवच॥ (४:८८)

The twentyone Narakas are: Tamisra, Andhatamisra, Maharourava, Rourava, Kalasutram, Mahanarakam; (4:88)

संजीवनंमहावीचिंतपनंसंप्रतापनम्।

संहातंचसकाकोलंकुड्मलंप्रतिमूर्तिकम्॥ (४:८९)

Sanjivanam, Mahavichi, Tapanam, Sampratapanam, Samhata, Sakakola, Kudmala, Pratimurtika; (4:89)

लोहशंकुं-ऋजीषंचपन्थानंशाल्मलींनदीम्।

असिपत्रेवनंचैवलोहदारकमेवच॥ (४:९०)

Lohasanku, Rujisham, Pantha, Salmali, river Vaitarani, Asipatra vana and Lohadaraka. (4:90)

एधोदकंमूल-फलं-अन्नं-अभ्युद्यतंचयत्।

सर्वतःप्रतिगृह्णीयान्-मध्वथाभय-दक्षिणाम्॥ (४:२४७)

Wood, water, roots, fruits, foodgrains, honey and offer of freedom from fear may be accepted from anybody. (4:247)

आहृताभ्युद्यतांभिक्षांपुरस्ताद्-अप्रचोदिताम्।

मेनेप्रजापतिर्-ग्राह्यं-अपिदुष्कृत-कर्मणः॥ (४:२४८)

Articles of gift, brought and placed before the recipient, when he had not sought the gift either directly or through somebody else, may be accepted even from an evil person; this is the opinion of Brahma. (4:248)

गुरून्-भृत्यांस्चो-ज्जिहीर्षन्-अर्चिष्यन्-देवता-तिथीन्।

सर्वतःप्रतिगृह्णीयान्-नतुतृप्येत्-स्वयंततः॥ (४:२५१)

One may accept alms from anybody for the purpose of relieving the hunger of elders and dependents, worshipping Gods and serving guests; but he should not use the alms for himself. (4:251)

14. Non-violence

यावन्तिपशु-रोमाणितावत्-कृत्वोहिमारणम्।

वृथा-पशुघ्नःप्राप्नोतिप्रेत्यजन्मनिजन्मनि॥ (५:३८)

One, who kills animals unnecessarily (for purpose not sanctioned in Vedas), is killed in birth after birth as many times as the number of hairs on the body of the killed animal. (5:38)

योबन्धन-वध-क्लेशान्-प्राणिनांनचिकीर्षति।

ससर्वस्यहित-प्रेप्सुःसुखं-अत्यन्तं-अश्नुते॥ (५:४६)

One, who desists from inflicting pain on animals by way of keeping them in bondage or killing them and is a universal well-wisher, attains immense happiness. (5:46)

नाकृत्वाप्राणिनांहिंसांमांसं-उत्पद्यतेक्वचित्।

नचप्राणि-वधःस्वर्ग्यस्-तस्मान्-मांसंविवर्जयेत्॥ (५:४८)

Meat can never be produced without killing animals. Killing animals does not lead one to Swarga. Hence meat should be eschewed. (5:48)

नभक्षयतियोमांसंविधिंहित्वापिशाचवत्।

सलोकेप्रियतांयातिव्याधिभिश्चनपीड्यते॥ (५:५०)

One, who desists from eating meat like a devil in violation of Vedic injunctions, is liked in the world by all and does not suffer from diseases. (5:50)

अनुमन्ताविशसितानिहन्ताक्रय-विक्रयी।

संस्कर्ताचोपहर्ताचखादकश्चेतिघातकाः॥ (५:५१)

One who permits killing of animals, one who cuts the flesh into pieces, one who kills, one who sells, one who buys, one who cooks, one who serves and one who eats are all killers of the animal. (5:51)

वर्षेवर्षेऽश्वमेधेनयोयजेतशतंसमाः।

मांसानिचनखादेद्-यस्-तयोःपुण्य-फलंसमम्।। (५:५३)

One who performs Aswamedha yagna every year for a hundred years and one who does not eat any meat, both earn the fruit of equal religious merit. (5:53)

मांसभक्षयिताऽमुत्रयस्यमांसमिहाद्म्यहम्।

एतन्-मांसस्यमांसत्वंप्रवदन्तिमनीषिणः॥ (५:५५)

The derivation of the word ‘मांस’ is given thus by the wise:The animal, whose flesh I eat here now, will eat me in the next world - ‘मांस:’(5:55)

15. Purity

ज्ञानंतपोऽग्निर्-आहारोमृन्-मनोवार्य्-उपाञ्जनम्।

वायुःकर्मा-र्क-कालौचशुद्धेःकर्तृणिदेहिनाम्॥ (५:१०५)

Knowledge, penance, fire, proper food, mud, mind, water, proper unguent, wind, karma (yagna etc.), Sun and time are purifying agents for humans. (5:105)

सर्वेषामेवशौचानां-अर्थ-शौचंपरंस्मृतम्।

योऽर्थेशुचिर्हिसशुचिर्नमृद्-वारि-शुचिःशुचिः॥ (५:१०६)

Of all purities, purity of wealth (earning through just means) is the most important. One who maintains purity in wealth is indeed pure; not the one who maintains purity of body through mud and water. (5:106)

क्षान्त्याशुद्ध्यन्तिविद्वांसोदानेना-कार्य-कारिणः।

प्रच्छन्न-पापाजप्येनतपसावेद-वित्तमाः॥ (५:१०७)

The learned scholars attain purity through forgiveness; those who have engaged in prohibited acts, through charity; those who have committed sins stealthily, through chanting of mantras; scholars of Veda, through penance. (5:107)

अद्भिर्-गात्राणिशुद्ध्यन्तिमन: सत्येनशुद्ध्यति।

विद्या-तपोभ्यांभूतात्माबुद्धिर्-ज्ञानेनशुद्ध्यति।। (५:१०९)

The body is purified by water; the mind, by truth; the embodied self (jivatma), by learning and penance; the intellect, by true knowledge. (5:109)

तैजसानांमणीनांचसर्वस्य्-आश्ममयस्यच।

भस्मना-द्भिर्-मृदाचैवशुद्धिर्-उक्तामनीषिभिः॥ (५:१११)

The wise say that glittering objects (like gold), gems and objects of stone are purified by application of ashes, water and mud. (5:111)

विण्-मूत्रो-त्सर्ग-शुद्ध्यर्थंमृद्-वार्य्-आदेयं-अर्थवत्।

दैहिकानांमलानांचशुद्धिषुद्वादशस्वपि॥ (५:१३४)

To purify the body after passing stools and urine and also for cleaning in case of twelve bodily impurities, one should use mud and water as necessary. (5:135)

वसाशुक्रं-असृङ्-मज्जामूत्र-विट्घ्राण-कर्ण-विट्।

श्लेष्मा-श्रुदूषिकास्वेदोद्वादशैतेनृणांमलाः॥ (५:१३५)

The twelve bodily impurities are: fat, semen, blood, marrow, urine, stools, phlegm, wax of the ear, sputum, tears, mucus from the eye, sweat.

16. Control of Senses and Mind

इन्द्रियाणांविचरतांविषयेषु-अपहारिषु।

संयमेयत्नं-आतिष्ठेद्-विद्वान्-यन्तेववाजिनाम्॥ (२:८८)

A wise person should try to control the sense-organs, moving among objects, which drag the sense-organs with them, like a good charioteer would control the horses. (2:88)

एकादशे-न्द्रियाण्य्-आहुर्-यानिपूर्वेमनीषिणः।

तानिसम्यक्-प्रवक्ष्यामियथावद्-अनुपूर्वशः॥ (२:८९)

I shall describe the eleven sesnse-organs in their proper order, as stated by previous scholars. (2:89)

श्रोत्रं-त्वक्चक्षुषीजिह्वानासिकाचैवपञ्चमी।

पायू-पस्थंहस्त-पादंवाक्चैवदशमीस्मृता॥ (२:९०)

Ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose are the (first) five sense-organs; the organ of excretion, the generative organ, hands, feet and speech are the (next) five sense-organs. There are thus ten sense-organs in all. (2:90)

बुद्धी-न्द्रियाणिपञ्चैषांश्रोत्रादीन्-यनुपूर्वशः।

कर्मे-न्द्रियाणिपञ्चैषांपाय्-वादीनिप्रचक्षते॥ (२:९१)

Of these, the first five - ears etc. - are the sense-organs of perception. The rest five - organ of excretion etc. - are the sense-organs of action.

एकादशंमनोज्ञेयंस्वगुणेन-उभयात्मकम्।

यस्मिञ्जितेजितावेतौभवतःपञ्चकौगुणौ॥ (२:९२)

The eleventh is to be known as the mind (the internal sense - organ - Antahkarana), which is of the nature of the above two groups of five (propelling them). By conquering mind, the two groups of five sense-organs are conquered. (2:92)

इन्द्रियाणांप्रसङ्गेनदोषं-ऋच्छत्य्-असंशयम्।

संनियम्यतुतान्येवततःसिद्धिंनियच्छति॥ (२:९३)

By attaching to the senses (and objects), one attracts fault without doubt. By controlling them well, one attains perfection. (2:93)

नजातुकामःकामानां-उपभोगेनशाम्यति।

हविषाकृष्णवर्त्मेवभूयएवाभिवर्धते॥ (२:९४)

By enjoying sense-pleasures, desire is never satisfied. On the other hand it goes on increasing like fire with oblations poured into it. (This is also a famous statement made by king Yayati after enjoying sense-pleasures for a full thousand years. The term 'Krishna-vartma' used for Fire here is interesting. It refers to the stream of smoke, which always accompanies fire. The implication is that like fire, enjoyment of sense-pleasures leaves the black dense smoke of desire behind.) (2:94)

यश्चैतान्-प्राप्नुयात्-सर्वान्-यश्चैतान्-केवलांस्-त्यजेत्।

प्रापणात्-सर्वकामानांपरित्यागोविशिष्यते॥ (२:९५)

On comparison of one, who attains all his objects of desire, with another, who renounces them totally, it is seen that sacrifice of all pleasures is superior to attaining them. (2:95)

नतथैतानिशक्यन्तेसंनियन्तुम्-असेवया।

विषयेषुप्रजुष्टानियथाज्ञानेननित्यशः॥ (२:९६)

By avoiding sense-objects, the sense-organs, which always tend to attach to them, cannot be controlled. They can be controlled only by the knowledge (of discrimination and the harm caused by enjoyment of sense-pleasures). (2:96)

वेदास्-त्यागश्चयज्ञाश्चनियमाश्चतपांसिच।

नविप्र-दुष्ट-भावस्यसिद्धिंगच्छन्तिकर्हिचित्॥ (२:९७)

Study of Vedas, charity, yagnas, observance of regulations, penances etc. do not bring perfection (attainment of desirable goals) to one, who is given to erroneous attitude (of enjoyment of sense-pleasures). (2:97)

श्रुत्वास्पृष्ट्वाचदृष्ट्वाचभुक्त्वाघ्रात्वाचयोनरः।

नहृष्यतिग्लायतिवासविज्ञेयोजितेन्द्रियः॥ (२:९८)

One is considered to have conquered the sense-organs, if he feels neither pleasure nor pain when the senses of hearing, touch, sight, eating and smell are employed (in favourable or unfavourable objects). (2:98)

इन्द्रियाणांतुसर्वेषांयद्येकंक्षरती-न्द्रियम्।

तेनास्यक्षरतिप्रज्ञादृतेःपादादिवो-दकम्॥ (२:९९)

Even if any one among all the sense-organs leaks (i.e. gets attached to objects uncontrollably), the man's alertness (of discrimination) leaks through it in the same way as water would leak through a hole in a leather container. (2:99)

वशेकृत्वे-न्द्रियग्रामंसंयम्यचमनस्-तथा।

सर्वान्-संसाधयेद्-अर्थान्-अक्षिण्वन्-योगतस्-तनुम्॥ (२:१००)

Controlling the group of sense-organs and also restraining the mind, one shall attain all Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha), adopting proper means for not mortifying the body. (2:100)

17. Tapas (Austerity)

सम्मानाद्-ब्राह्मणोनित्यम्-उद्विजेतविषादिव।

अमृतस्येवचा-कांक्षेद्-अवमानस्यसर्वदा॥ (२:१६२)

A wise one should always shun honour like poison and welcome insult like nectar. (2:162)

इन्द्रियार्थेषुसर्वेषुनप्रसज्येतकामतः।

अतिप्रसक्तिंचैतेषांमनसासंनिवर्तयेत्॥ (४:१६)

One should not delight in being attached too much to sense-objects. By control of mind one should desist from too much of attachment. (4:16)

सुखंह्यवमत: शेतेसुखंचप्रतिबुध्यते।

सुखंचरतिलोकेऽस्मिन्-अवमन्ताविनश्यति॥ (२:१६३)

One, who has been disrespected, sleeps comfortably, wakes up comfortably and moves about in this world comfortably, whereas the one, who dishonoured him, perishes. (2:163)

ऋषयःसंयतात्मानःफल-मूला-निला-शनाः।

तपसैवप्रपश्यन्तित्रैलोक्यंसचराचरम्॥ (११:२३६)

Rishis, having controlled their minds and consuming only fruits, roots and air, perceive through their austerity alone, all the three worlds including all movable and immovable objects. (11:236)

औषधान्यगदोविद्यादैवीचविविधास्थितिः।

तपसैवप्रसिद्ध्यन्तितपस्तेषांहिसाधनम्॥ (११:२३७)

Through austerity alone, are attained medicines, freedom from disease and various divine conditions; austerity is the only means to them. (11:237)

यद्दुस्तरंयद्दुरापंयद्दुर्गंयच्चदुष्करम्।

सर्वंतुतपसासाध्यंतपोहिदुरतिक्रमम्॥ (११:२३८)

Whatever is difficult to cross, difficult to attain, difficult of access, difficult to do - all this is attained through austerity. Austerity is not capable of being defeated. (11:238)

महापातकिनश्चैवशेषाश्चा-कार्य-कारिणः।

तपसैवसुतप्तेनमुच्यन्तेकिल्बिषात्-ततः॥ (११:२३९)

Those who commit great sins and the remaining who indulge in prohibited acts are freed of their sins only through penance, well-practised.

यत्-किंचिद्-एनःकुर्वन्तिमनो-वाङ्-मूर्तिभिर्-जनाः।

तत्-सर्वंनिर्दहन्त्-याशुतपसैवतपोधनाः॥ (११:२४१)

Whatever sins people generally commit through their mind, speech and body, can all be burnt away quickly by ascetics (those whose only wealth is austerity) through penance. (11:241)

ऋक्संहितांत्रिरभ्यस्ययजुषांवासमाहितः।

साम्नांवासरहस्यानांसर्व-पापैःप्रमुच्यते॥ (११:२६२)

By chanting with full concentration Rigveda, Yajurveda or Samaveda thrice with their esoteric parts (Upanishads), one is released of all sins. (11:262)

यथामहाह्रदंप्राप्यक्षिप्तंलोष्टंविनश्यति।

तथादुश्चरितंसर्वंवेदेत्रिवृतिमज्जति॥ (११:२६३)

Just as a clod of earth disappears when thrown in a big reservoir of water, all evil actions disappear on chanting Veda thrice. (11:263)

ऋचोयजूंषिचान्यानिसामानिविविधानिच।

एषज्ञेयस्-त्रिवृद्-वेदोयोवेदैनंसवेदवित्॥ (११:२६४)

The knower (one who contemplates and is intent on Moksha) of threefold Vedas - Rig, Yajur and Sama, with their Brahmanas etc. - is indeed knower of Veda. (11:264)

आद्यंयत्त्र्यक्षरंब्रह्मत्रयीयस्मिन्-प्रतिष्ठिताः।

सगुह्योऽन्यस्-त्रिवृद्-वेदोयस्तंवेदसवेदवित्॥ (११:२६५)

The knower (one who contemplates and is intent on Moksha) of the esoteric three-syllabled primeval mantra, Pranava (Omkara), in which are established the three Vedas, is indeed knower of Veda. (11:265)

18. Karmas and Fruits

शुभा-शुभ-फलंकर्ममनो-वाग्-देह-संभवम्।

कर्मजागतयोनृणां-उत्तमा-धम-मध्यमाः॥ (१२:३)

Actions of people through mind, speech and body produce auspicious and inauspicious fruits. The fruits are superior, intermediate or lowly depending on karma. (12:3)

तस्येहत्रिविधस्यापित्र्यधिष्ठानस्यदेहिनः।

दशलक्षण-युक्तस्यमनोविद्यात्-प्रवर्तकम्॥ (१२:४)

All karmas of the three types (with superior, intermediate or lowly fruits) and originating from three sources (mind, speech and body) have ten characteristics; all karmas are initiated in the mind of the jiva. (12:4)

Note: Manu lists the ten characteristics in the following three slokas.

पर-द्रव्येष्व्-अभिध्यानंमनसा-निष्ट-चिन्तनम्।

वितथा-भिनिवेशश्चत्रिविधंकर्ममानसम्॥ (१२:५)

Karmas of mind (bearing evil fruit) are of three types - thinking of grabbing others' wealth; nurturing ill-will for others; attachment to false principles (like body is indeed the soul; there is no next world etc.). (12:5)

पारुष्यं-अनृतंचैवपैशुन्यंचापिसर्वशः।

असंबद्ध-प्रलापश्चवाङ्मयंस्याच्-चतुर्विधम्। (१२:६)

Karmas of speech (bearing evil fruit) are of four types - harsh words; telling lies; backbiting of all kinds; irrelevant talk. (12:6)

अदत्तानां-उपादानंहिंसाचैवा-विधानतः।

पर-दारोपसेवाचशारीरंत्रिविधंस्मृतम्॥ (१२:७)

Karmas of mind (bearing evil fruit) are of three types - grabbing others' wealth not gifted to him; violence perpetrated against rules; relations with others' wife. (12:7)

मानसंमनसैवायं-उपभुङ्क्तेशुभाशुभम्।

वाचावाचाकृतंकर्मकायेनैवचकायिकम्॥ (१२:८)

The fruits of good and evil actions of mind have to be reaped through mind alone; similarly fruits of actions of speech through speech and, fruits of actions of body through body. (12:8)

शरीरजैःकर्मदोषैर्-यातिस्थावरतांनरः।

वाचिकैःपक्षि-मृगतांमानसैर्-अन्त्यजातिताम्॥ (१२:९)

A person goes to immobile state (like stone) in the next birth as a result of evil actions of body; he becomes bird or animal following evil speech; he falls into uncultured lowly human births as a result of evil thinking. (12:9)

वाग्दण्डोऽथमनोदण्डःकायदण्डस्-तथैवच।

यस्यैतेनिहिताबुद्धौत्रिदण्डीतिसउच्यते॥ (१२:१०)

One, who keeps speech, mind and body (Vakdanda, manodanda and Kayadanda) under control of his intellect, is known as 'Tridandi' (Tridandi is a sanyasi, who holds three dandas or sticks, indicative of these three restraints). (12:10)

त्रिदण्डं-एतन्-निक्षिप्यसर्व-भूतेषुमानवः।

कामक्रोधौतुसंयम्यततःसिद्धिंप्रयच्छति॥ (१२:११)

Exercising these three restraints (dandas) in his relations with all humans and keeping desire and anger controlled, one attains fulfillment of objective of human birth, viz. Moksha. (12:11)

योऽस्यात्मनःकारयितातंक्षेत्रज्ञंप्रचक्षते।

यःकरोतितुकर्माणिसभूतात्म्-ओच्यतेबुधैः॥ (१२:१२)

Kshetragna (Knower of field of action) is he who motivates Atma (Bhutatma) to perform actions. Bhutatma is the body complex, who performs actions, so say the learned persons. (12:12)

जीव-संज्ञोऽन्तरात्मान्यःसहजःसर्वदेहिनाम्।

येनवेदयतेसर्वंसुखंदुःखंचजन्मसु॥ (१२:१३)

Jivatma is the inner controller, who is ever together with the body for all beings and who experiences all pleasures and pains in all births. (12:13)

तावुभौभूत-संपृक्तौमहान्-क्षेत्रज्ञएवच।

उच्चावचेषुभूतेषुस्थितंतंव्याप्यतिष्ठतः॥ (१२:१४)

Those two, Mahan and Kshetragna, closely associated with the body of five elements, abide always in Paramatma, denoted by 'That' in Vedas, while in superior or inferior bodies. (12:14)

असंख्यामूर्तयस्-तस्यनिष्पतन्तिशरीरतः।

उच्चावचानिभूतानिसततंचेष्टयन्तियाः॥ (१२:१५)

From the body of that Paramatma, innumerable bodies of high and low jivas come out, who are always busy in different activities. (12:15)

पञ्चभ्यएवमात्राभ्यःप्रेत्यदुष्कृतिनांनृणाम्।

शरीरंयातनार्थीयं-अन्यद्-उत्पद्यतेध्रुवम्॥ (१२:१६)

Evil persons, after leaving their present bodies, attain special bodies in next world (naraka) from the five great elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) for experiencing intense pain. (12:16)

तेना-नुभूयतायामीःशरीरेणेहयातनाः।

तास्वेवभूतमात्रासुप्रलीयन्तेविभागशः॥ (१२:१७)

Through those bodies they suffer tortures inflicted by Yama and then they again merge into the same five elements. (12:17)

सोऽनुभूयासुखोदर्कान्-दोषान्-विषयसङ्गजान्।

व्यपेत-कल्मषोऽभ्येतितावेवोभौमहौजसौ॥ (१२:१८)

These jivas, after experiencing the fruits of their virtuous or vicious actions born of attachment to sense-objects and, rid of their essential faults, attain the same splendrous two - Mahan and Paramatma. (12:18)

तौधर्मंपश्यतस्-तस्यपापंचातन्द्रितौसह।

याभ्यांप्राप्नोतिसंपृक्तःप्रेत्येहचसुखासुखम्॥ (१२:१९)

Those two, Mahan and Paramatma, look into the jivas' balance virtues and sins vigilantly; the jivas then experience pleasure and pain in this world and the next. (12:19)

यद्याचरतिधर्मंसप्रायशोऽधर्मं-अल्पशः।

तैरेवचावृतोभूतैःस्वर्गेसुखं-उपाश्नुते॥ (१२:२०)

If the jiva practises dharma mostly, with adharma in a small way, he enjoys pleasures after death in Swarga in his subtle body of the same five elements. (12:20)

यदितुप्रायशोऽधर्मंसेवतेधर्मं-अल्पशः।

तैर्-भूतैःसपरित्यक्तोयामीःप्राप्नोतियातनाः॥ (१२:२१)

If he practises adharma mostly, with a little of dharma, he experiences tortures in naraka in his special body, deserted by the five elements. (12:21)

यामीस्तायातनाःप्राप्यसजीवोवीत-कल्मषः।

तान्येवपञ्चभूतानिपुनरप्येतिभागशः॥ (१२:२२)

After experiencing the torture of Yama and thus being rid of sins, the jiva comes back to this world again in a body of the five elements in proportion. (Various beings on earth possess bodies of five elements in varying proportions and the jiva is born in an appropriate form suited to his balance karma). (12:22)

एतादृष्ट्वास्यजीवस्यगतीःस्वेनैवचेतसा।

धर्मतोऽधर्मतश्चैवधर्मेदध्यात्-सदामनः॥ (१२:२३)

Perceiving in his mind these results of karmas of dharma and adharma, the jiva should always submit his mind to dharma. (12:23)

इन्द्रियाणांप्रसङ्गेनधर्मस्य्-आसेवनेनच।

पापान्-संयान्तिसंसारान्-अविद्वांसोनराधमाः॥ (१२:५२)

By infatuation with sense objects and failure to observe dharma, ignorant humans of the worst kind reach miserable birth cycles. (12:52)

तेऽभ्यासात्-कर्मणांतेषांपापानां-अल्पबुद्धयः।

संप्राप्नुवन्तिदुःखानितासुतास्विहयोनिषु॥ (१२:७४)

By repeated performance of sinful acts, the persons of lesser intellect experience pain in the respective births they attain. (Depending on the intensity and frequency of sins committed, these persons fall into different miserable births). (12:74)

तामिस्रादिषुचोग्रेषुनरकेषुविवर्तनम्।

असिपत्रवनादीनिबन्धनच्छेदनानिच॥ (१२:७५)

These sinners go to hells of intense suffering like Tamisra, Asipatravana etc. and undergo tortures of bondage and piercing. (12:75)

विविधाश्चैवसंपीडाःकाकोलूकैश्चभक्षणम्।

करम्भ-वालुकातापान्-कुम्भीपाकांश्चदारुणान्॥ (१२:७६)

In various hells of torture like Kumbhipaka, they experience various kinds of misery including being eaten by animals like crows, owls etc. and burnt on beds of heated sand. (12:76)

संभवांश्चवियोनीषुदुःखप्रायाशुनित्यशः।

शीतातपाभिघातांश्चविविधानिभयानिच॥ (१२:७७)

They are born always in various sub-human species of misery and experience onslaught of heat and cold and fears. (12:77)

असकृद्-गर्भवासेषुवासंजन्मचदारुणम्।

बन्धनानिचकाष्ठानिपर-प्रेष्यत्वमेवच॥ (१२:७८)

They enter into different wombs again and again, go through the terrible pain of birth and experience different bondages including slavery of others. (12:78)

बन्धु-प्रिय-वियोगांश्चसंवासंचैवदुर्जनैः।

द्रव्यार्जनंचनाशंचमित्रामित्रस्यचार्जनम्॥ (१२:७९)

They experience separation from relatives and loving friends, life with evil persons, earning of wealth, loss of wealth and also getting friends as well as foes. (12:79)

जरांचैवाप्रतीकारांव्याधिभिश्चोपपीडनम्।

क्लेशांश्चविविधांस्-तांस्-तान्-मृत्युमेवचदुर्जयम्॥ (१२:८०)

They further experience old age, which cannot be countered, suffer from diseases and pangs of different types (like hunger, thirst) and finally face death, which cannot be conquered. (12:80)

यादृशेनतुभावेनयद्यत्-कर्मनिषेवते।

तादृशेनशरीरेणतत्तत्-फलं-उपाश्नुते॥ (१२:८१)

Whichever sentiment they adopt in different actions, they experience fruits of the same kind with suitable body of that type. (12:81)

19. Three Gunas (Attributes)

सत्वंरजस्-तमश्चैवत्रीन्-विद्याद्-आत्मनोगुणान्।

यैर्-व्याप्येमान्स्थितोभावान्-महान्-सर्वान्-अशेषतः॥ (१२:२४)

One should recognize the three attributes (gunas) in his mind - Satva (peace), rajas (passion) and tamas (inertia). These gunas pervade the entire creation without exception. (12:24)

योयदैषांगुणोदेहेसाकल्येन्-आतिरिच्यते।

सतदातद्-गुणप्रायंतंकरोतिशरीरिणम्॥ (१२:२५)

The guna, which is predominant in a particular body, propels the jiva mostly according to that guna. (12:25)

सत्वंज्ञानंतमोऽज्ञानंराग-द्वेषौरजःस्मृतम्।

एतद्-व्याप्तिमद्-एतेषांसर्व-भूता-श्रितंवपुः॥ (१२:२६)

True knowledge is the characteristic of satva; ignorance of truth is tamas; attachment and repulsion are rajas.This body of five elements is ever pervaded by these gunas. (12:26)

तत्रयत्-प्रीति-संयुक्तंकिंचिद्-आत्मनिलक्षयेत्।

प्रशान्तं-इवशुद्धाभंसत्वंतद्-उपधारयेत्॥ (१२:२७)

In the Atma, whatever little kind, peaceful and pure brightness is seen, know that as satvaguna. (12:27)

यत्तुदुःख-समायुक्तं-अप्रीतिकरं-आत्मनः।

तद्-रजोप्रतीपंविद्यात्-सततंहारिदेहिनाम्॥ (१२:२८)

Whatever is accompanied by misery, is disagreeable to the Atma, but attractive to the senses should be recognized as rajoguna. (12:28)

यत्तुस्यान्-मोह-संयुक्तं-अव्यक्तंविषयात्मकम्।

अप्रतर्क्यं-अविज्ञेयंतमस्-तद्-उपधारयेत्॥ (१२:२९)

Whatever is full of delusion, unclear and purely at the level of sense objects, does not admit of logic and is ununderstandable, know that as tamoguna. (12:29)

वेदाभ्यासस्-तपोज्ञानंशौचं-इन्द्रिय-निग्रहः।

धर्म-क्रिया-त्मचिन्ताचसात्विकंगुण-लक्षणम्।। (१२:३१)

Practice of Veda chanting, penance, true knowledge, purity (external and internal), sense control, right actions (sanctioned by Sastras) and contemplation of Self are the characteristics of Satvaguna. (12:31)

आरम्भ-रुचिताऽधैर्यं-असत्-कार्य-परिग्रहः।

विषयोपसेवाचाजस्रंराजसंगुण-लक्षणम्।। (१२:३२)

Keenness in commencing new activities, lack of courage, doing evil acts and continuous enjoyment of sense objects are the characteristics of Rajoguna. (12:32)

लोभःस्वप्नोऽधृतिःक्रौर्यंनास्तिक्यंभिन्न-वृत्तिता।

याचिष्णुताप्रमादश्चतामसंगुण-लक्षणम्॥ (१२:३३)

Greed, sleepiness, lack of steadfastness, cruelty, atheism, taking to livelihood different from the one prescribed, habit of begging and inadvertence are the characteristics of Tamoguna. (12:33)

तमसोलक्षणंकामोरजसस्त्व्-अर्थउच्यते।

सत्वस्यलक्षणंधर्मःश्रैष्ठ्यं-एषांयथोत्तरम्॥ (१२:३८)

The basic characteristic of Tamas is desire; that of Rajas is wealth; that of Satva is dharma. The latter is superior to the former in this order. (12:38)

देवत्वंसात्विकायान्तिमनुष्यत्वंचराजसाः।

तिर्यक्त्वंतामसानित्यं-इत्येषात्रिविधागतिः॥ (१२:४०)

Those established in Satvaguna attain to the status of Deva; Rajasic persons, humans; Tamasic persons, animal birth. This is the threefold path of humans (after death).

Note: Manu sub-divides the three basic characteristics of Satva, Rajas and Tamas into superior (uttama), medium (madhyama) and inferior (adhama); he then describes the types of births these nine categories attain on death.

20. Sins and Expiation

अकुर्वन्-विहितंकर्मनिन्दितंचसमाचरन्।

प्रसक्तश्चे-न्द्रियार्थेषुप्रायश्चित्तीयतेनरः॥ (११:४४)

One, who fails to perform prescribed actions and indulges in prohibited actions and remains attached to sensual attractions, must go through expiation. (11:44)

अकामत: कृतेपापेप्रायश्चित्तंविदुर्-बुधाः।

कामकार-कृतेऽप्य्-आहुर्-एकेश्रुति-निदर्शनात्॥ (११:४५)

If one commits sins unknowingly, wise persons recommend expiatory measures. Some persons say that even when sins are committed knowingly out of attachment to fruits, expiation is permitted in Vedas. (11:45)

सुवर्ण-चौरःकौनख्यंसुरापःश्यावदन्तताम्।

ब्रह्महाक्षयरोगित्वंदौश्चर्म्यंगुरुतल्पगः॥ (११:४९)

One who steals gold is born with nails disfigured; drunkard gets black teeth; a killer of brahmana suffers from tuberculosis; one who has illicit relation with Guru’s wife acquires acute skin diseases. (11:49)

Note: These afflictions may occur in this life itself or future lives as per Manu.

पिशुनःपौतिनासिक्यंसूचकःपूति-वक्त्रताम्।

धान्य-चौरोऽङ्ग-हीनत्वं-आतिरेक्यंतुमिश्रकः॥ (११:५०)

One who finds fault with others produces foul smell from his nose; backbiter, foul smell from mouth; thief of foodgrains becomes handicapped; adulterator has more limbs than normal. (11:50)

अन्न-हर्ता-मयावित्वंमौक्यंवाग्-अपहारकः।

वस्त्र्-आपहारकःश्वैत्र्यंपङ्गुतां-अश्व-हारकः॥ (११:५१)

One who steals food suffers from dyspepsia; one, who learns stealthily without being taught directly by Guru, becomes dumb; stealer of clothes suffers from leucoderma; stealer of horse becomes lame. (11:51)

एवंकर्म-विशेषेणजायन्तेसद्-विगर्हिताः।

जड-मूका-न्ध-बहिराविकृता-कृतयस्-तथा॥ (११:५२)

Thus the sinners, condemned by the virtuous, are born in their next life as mentally retarded, dumb, blind, deaf and deformed. (11:52)

येबक-व्रतिनोविप्रायेचमार्जार-लिङ्गिनः।

तेपतन्त्-यन्धतामिस्रेतेनपापेनकर्मणा॥ (४:१९७)

Those wise men, who are Baka-vratis (have characteristics of duck- selfish, injurious and wearing cloak of humility) and Marjara-lingis (who, like cats, put on cloak of followers of dharma, but injurious and intolerant of praise of others), fall into the hell of Andhatamisra owing to their pernicious deeds. (4:197)

यान-शय्या-सनान्-यस्यकूपोद्यान-गृहाणिच।

अदत्तान्य्-उपभुञ्जानएनसःस्यात्-तुरीयभाक्॥ (४:२०२)

One, who enjoys a vehicle, bed, seat, well, garden and house without being permitted by the owner, shares one-fourth of the sins of the owner. (4:202)

चरित-व्यमतोनित्यंप्रायश्चित्तंविशुद्धये।

निन्द्यैर्हिलक्षणैर्-युक्ताजायन्तेऽनिष्कृतैनसः॥ (११:५३)

Hence it is essential to take expiatory steps constantly for self-purification; those, who do not do it, are born with condemnable characteristics. (11:53)

ब्रह्महत्यासुरापानंस्तेयंगुर्वङ्गनागमः।

महान्तिपातकान्य्-आहुःसंसर्गश्चापितैस्सह॥ (११:५४)

Five sins are said to be great: killing of a brahmana, consumption of liquor, stealing, illicit relation with Guru's wife and, lastly, association with those who commit any of these four great sins. (11:54)

अनृतंचसमुत्कर्षेराजगामिचपैशुनम्।

गुरोश्चालीक-निर्बन्धःसमानिब्रह्महत्यया॥ (११:५५)

Uttering falsehood for self-promotion, backbiting against somebody to the king and telling lies about Guru are equally sinful as killing of brahmana. (11:55)

ब्रह्मोज्झतावेद-निन्दाकौट-साक्ष्यंसुहृद्-वधः।

गर्हितान्-आद्ययोर्-जग्धिःसुरापान-समानिषट्॥ (११:५६)

Forgetting Veda studied in the past, criticizing Veda (in support of anti-Vedic principles or religions), falsity in statement as witness, killing of a friend and eating prohibited materials and eating against vows undertaken are the six sins equal to consumption of liquor. (11:56)

निक्षेपस्य्-आपहरणंनराश्वरजतस्यच।

भूमि-वज्र-मणीनांचरुक्म-स्तेय-समंस्मृतम्॥ (११:५७)

Misappropriating material deposited in trust, kidnapping man, stealing horse, silver, land, diamond and gems - these are equal (in sin) to stealing of gold. (11:57)

Note: Manu goes on to list sins equal to illicit relation with Guru's wife and then sins of second grade called 'Upapatakas'.

गुरुतल्प्-यभिभाष्यैनस्-तप्तेस्वप्यादयोमये।

सूर्मींज्वलन्तींस्वाश्लिष्येन्-मृत्युनासविशुद्ध्यति॥ (११:१०३)

A person, who has had illicit relation with his Guru's wife, should announce his sin publicly and lie down on a bed of red-hot iron; or, he should embrace a red-hot iron statue of woman till he dies; he is thus purified. (11:103)

Note: Manu lists such penance of self-mortification for other major sins also.

योयेनपतितेनैषांसंसर्गंयातिमानवः।

सतस्यैवव्रतंकुर्यात्-तत्-संसर्ग-विशुद्धये॥ (११:१८१)

Whoever keeps company of a sinner, he should go through the same expiatory measures as prescribed for the sinner for his own purification. (11:181)

यथायथानरोऽधर्मंस्वयंकृत्वानुभाषते।

तथातथात्वचेवा-हिस्-तेना-धर्मेणमुच्यते॥ (११:२२८)

As and when a person makes public his sin, he is freed from that adharma, like snake from its slough. (11:228)

यथायथामनस्-तस्यदुष्कृतंकर्मगर्हति।

तथातथाशरीरंतत्तेना-धर्मेणमुच्यते॥ (११:२२९)

As and when a person's mind gets critical of his sinful action, his body (and jiva) gets freed from that adharma. (11:229)

कृत्वापापंहिसंतप्यतस्मात्-पापात्-प्रमुच्यते।

नैवंकुर्यांपुनरितिनिवृत्यापूयतेतुसः॥ (११:२३०)

After committing a sin, if a person repents and vows not to repeat that sin, he is purified. (11:230)

एवंसंचिन्त्यमनसोप्रेत्यकर्म-फल्-ओदयम्।

मनो-वाङ्-मूर्तिभिर्-नित्यंशुभंकर्मसमाचरेत्॥ (११:२३१)

Considering thus the effects in the next world of actions performed now, one should always perform good deeds with his mind, speech and body. (11:231)

21. Ruler's Qualities

सोमा-ग्न्य-र्का-निले-न्द्राणांवित्ताप्पत्योर्-यमस्यच।

अष्टानांलोकपालानांवपुर्-धारयतेनृपः॥ (५:९६)

A king's form derives from Chandra, Agni, Surya, Vayu, Indra, Kubera, Varuna and Yama and the eight Lokapalas. (5:96)

एकमेवदहत्य्-अग्निर्-नरंदुरुपसर्पिणम्।

कुलंदहतिराजाग्निःसपशु-द्रव्य-संचयम्॥ (७:९)

Fire burns only one person, who falls in it. However the fire (of wrath) of the king burns the entire family of the victim, together with his accumulated wealth of cattle and valuables. (7:9)

यस्यप्रसादेपद्माश्रीर्-विजयश्चपराक्रमे।

मृत्युश्चवसतिक्रोधेसर्व-तेजोमयोहिसः॥ (७:११)

Lakshmi (splendour) abides in the king's grace; victory, in his valour; death, in his wrath; He is indeed the embodiment of all brilliance. (7:11)

त्रैविद्येभ्यस्-त्रयींविद्यांदण्डनीतिंचशाश्वतीम्।

आन्वीक्षिकींचात्मविद्यांवार्तारम्भांश्चलोकतः॥ (७:४३)

He should learn the three Vedas, the eternal rule of law, the science of logic and spiritual knowledge from knowers of Vedas and mundane pursuits from experts in those fields. (7:43)

इन्द्रियाणांजयेयोगंसमातिष्ठेद्-दिवा-निशम्।

जितेन्द्रियोहिशक्नोतिवशेस्थापयितुंप्रजाः॥ (७:४४)

He should put in efforts day and night in control of sense-organs. The king, who has his senses under control, is alone capable of controlling his subjects. (7:44)

दशकाम-समुत्थानितथाष्टौक्रोधजानिच।

व्यसनानिदुरन्तानिप्रयत्नेनविवर्जयेत्॥ (७:४५)

The following weaknesses,ten born of desire and eight born of anger, which are difficult to end, once allowed to sprout, should be discarded with effort. (7:45)

कामजेषुप्रसक्तोहिव्यसनेषुमहीपतिः।

वियुज्यतेऽर्थ-धर्माभ्यांक्रोधजेष्व्-आत्मनैवतु॥ (७:४६)

The king, infatuated with desires, is separated from Artha and Dharma; when overcome by anger, he loses his very Self. (7:46)

मृगयाऽक्षोदिवा-स्वप्नःपरिवादःस्त्रियोमदः।

तौर्यत्रिकंवृथाट्याचकामजोदशकोगणः॥ (७:४७)

The ten evils born of desire are: hunting, gambling, sleeping in day-time, unduly reviling others, women, wine, triple symphony of vocal music, instrumental music and dance, purposeless wandering. (7:47)

पैशुन्यंसाहसंद्रोहईर्ष्या-सूयार्थ-दूषणम्।

वाग्दण्डजंचपारुष्यंक्रोधजोऽपिगणोऽष्टकः॥ (७:४८)

The eight evils born of anger are: talking of imaginary follies of others, troubling the virtuous, malice, jealousy, finding fault with others, wrongful use of wealth, harshness of speech, severity of punishment. (7:48)

द्वयोरप्य्-एतयोर्-मूलंयंसर्वेकवयोविदुः।

तंयत्नेनजयेल्-लोभंतज्जावेताव्-उभौगणौ॥ (७:४९)

The wise have said that these two groups of evils (born of desire and anger) are rooted in greed; hence greed should be conquered with effort. (7:49)

पानं-अक्षाःस्त्रियश्चैवमृगयाचयथा-क्रमम्।

एतत्-कष्टतमंविद्याच्-चतुष्कंकामदेगणे॥ (७:५०)

In the group of ten evils born of desire, the four causing maximum misery are: wine, gambling, women and hunting. (7:50)

दण्डस्यपातनंचैववाक्-पारुष्या-र्थ-दूषणे।

क्रोधजेऽपिगणेविद्यात्-कष्टं-एतत्-त्रिकंसदा॥ (७:५१)

In the group of eight evils born of anger, the three causing maximum misery are: severe punishment, harsh speech and wrongful use of wealth. (7:51)

सप्तकस्यास्यवर्गस्यसर्वत्रैवा-नुषङ्गिगणः।

पूर्वंपूर्वंगुरुतरंविद्याद्-व्यसनं-आत्मवान्॥ (७:५२)

In the aforesaid group of seven prime evils (four born of desire and three born of anger), which are commonly found among kings, the former is to be understood by a wise king as more harmful than the latter in the order stated. (7:52)

22. Ruler and his Duties

स्वाम्य्-अमात्यौपुरंराष्ट्रंकोश-दण्डौसुहृत्-तथा।

सप्तप्रकृतयोह्येताःसप्ताङ्गंराज्यं-उच्यते॥ (९:२९४)

The king, ministers, city, kingdom, treasury, army and well-wishers - these are the seven limbs of state. (9:294)

सप्ताङ्गस्येहराज्यस्यविष्टब्धस्यत्रिदण्डवत्।

अन्योन्य-गुण-वैशेष्यान्-नकिञ्चिद्-अतिरिच्यते॥ (९:२९६)

All these seven limbs of state are mutually supportive of one another, like the three sticks (Tridanda) of a Sanyasi and none is redundant. (9:296)

कलिःप्रसुप्तोभवतिसजाग्रद्-द्वापरंयुगम्।

कर्मण्-यभ्युद्यतस्-त्रेताविचरंस्तुकृतंयुगम्॥ (९:३०२)

There is Kaliyuga when the king sleeps (is inactive) in ignorance or sloth; Dvaparayuga when he is awake (but does not follow dharma); Tretayuga when he is active in performing actions; Kritayuga when he moves about fully performing his actions as per dharma. (9:302)

इन्द्रस्य्-आर्कस्यवायोश्चयमस्यवरुणस्यच।

चन्द्रस्य्-आग्नेःपृथिव्याश्चतेजोवृत्तंनृपश्चरेत्॥ (९:३०३)

The king should act with the splendour of Indra, Surya, Vayu, Yama, Varuna, Chandra, Agni and Prithvi. (9:303)

वार्षिकांश्-चतुरोमासान्-यथेन्द्रोऽभिप्रवर्षति।

तथाभिवर्षेत्स्वंराष्ट्रंकामैर्-इन्द्र-व्रतंचरन्॥ (९:३०४)

Just as Indra pours rains abundantly in the four rainy months, the king should flood his nation with fulfillment of desires (of subjects), thus following the policy of Indra. (9:304)

अष्टौमासान्-यथा-दित्यस्-तोयंहरतिरश्मिभिः।

तथाहरेत्-करंराष्ट्रान्-नित्यं-अर्क-व्रतंहितत्॥ (९:३०५)

Just as Surya draws water from earth by his rays in the remaining four months, the king should collect taxes from his subjects continuously (not harshly), thus following the policy of Surya. (9:305)

प्रविश्यसर्व-भूतानियथाचरतिमारुतः।

तथाचारैःप्रवेष्टव्यंव्रतं-एतद्धिमारुतम्॥ (९:३०६)

Just as Vayu enters all beings and moves about (as Prana), the king should make his entry everywhere through his spies, thus following the policy of Vayu. (9:306)

यथायमःप्रिय-द्वेष्यौप्राप्तेकालेनियच्छति।

तथाराज्ञानियन्तव्याःप्रजास्-तद्धियम-व्रतम्॥ (९:३०७)

Just as Yama restrains beings at the appointed time irrespective of friend or foe, the king should restrain his subjects (without fear or favour), thus following the policy of Yama. (9:307)

वरुणेनयथापाशैर्-बद्धएवाभिदृश्यते।

तथापापान्-निगृह्णीयाद्-व्रतं-एतद्धिवारुणम्॥ (९:३०८)

Just as every sinner appears bound by the ropes of Varuna, the king should arrest and punish the sinners, following the policy of Varuna. (9:308)

परिपूर्णंयथाचन्द्रंदृष्ट्वाहृष्यन्तिमानवाः।

तथाप्रकृतयोयस्मिन्-सचान्द्र-व्रतिकोनृपः॥ (९:३०९)

Just as people become happy on seeing the full Moon, they should feel the same happiness on seeing the king; the king then has followed the policy of Moon. (9:309)

प्रताप-युक्तस्-तेजस्वीनित्यंस्यात्-पाप-कर्मसु।

दुष्ट-सामन्त-हिंस्रश्चतदाग्नेयंव्रतंस्मृतम्॥ (९:३१०)

The king should always subdue the sinners and evil-minded ministers and trouble-mongers with the power and brilliance of Agni, thus following the policy of Agni. (9:310)

यथासर्वाणिभूतानिधराधारयतेसमम्।

तथासर्वाणिभूतानिबिभ्रतःपार्थिवंव्रतम्॥ (९:३११)

Just as Prithvi (Earth) supports all beings (animate and inanimate) equally, the king should support all the beings in his kingdom with equanimity, thus following the policy of Prithvi. (9:311)

चारेण्-ओत्साह-योगेनक्रिययैवचकर्मणाम्।

स्वशक्तिंपरशक्तिंचनित्यंविद्यान्-महीपतिः॥ (९:२९८)

The king should always assess his own power and that of others (particularly enemies) by energetic use of his spies and collecting information through other actions (like watching trade route etc.). (9:298)

तंदेश-कालौशक्तिंचविद्यांचावेक्ष्यतत्वतः।

यथार्हतःसंप्रणयेन्-नरेष्व्-अन्यायवर्तिषु॥ (७:१६)

The king should direct his scepter (award punishment) (the scepter is the form of dharma), to persons who have committed crimes, considering place, time, power, education and scriptural injunctions thoroughly. (7:16)

समीक्ष्यसधृतःसंयक्-सर्वारञ्जयतिप्रजाः।

असमीक्ष्यप्रणीतस्तुविनाशयतिसर्वतः॥ (७:१९)

That punishment, when awarded after scrupulous consideration, delights all subjects. If awarded without due examination, it causes all-round destruction. (7:19)

यदिनप्रणयेद्-राजादण्डंदण्ड्येष्व्-अतन्द्रितः।

शूलेमत्स्यानिवापक्ष्यन्-दुर्बलान्-बलवत्तराः॥ (७:२०)

If the king does not decree due punishment to those who deserve it with due vigilance, the stronger people will wreak havoc on the weaker ones, like fish caught in the hook. (7:20)

सर्वांदण्डजितोलोकोदुर्लभोहिशुचिर्-नरः।

दण्डस्यहिभयात्-सर्वंजगद्-भोगायकल्पते॥ (७:२२)

This entire world is controlled by punishment alone. Man, who is pure by nature, is rare indeed. It is only due to fear of punishment that the world (food, wealth etc.) is available for enjoyment. (7:22)

तंराजाप्रणमन्-संयक्त्रिवर्गेणा-भिवर्धते।

कामात्माविषमःक्षुद्रोदण्डेनैवनिहन्यते॥ (७:२७)

The king, who utilizes the scepter (punishment) properly, flourishes in all three Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha and Kama). On the other hand if the king is lustful, biased and mean-minded, he is destroyed by that very scepter. (7:27)

दूतंचैवप्रकुर्वीतसर्व-शास्त्र-विशारदम्।

इङ्गिताकार-चेष्टज्ञंशुचिंदक्षंकुलोद्गतम्।। (७:६३)

The king should appoint emissary, who is master of all scriptures and sciences, who knows the art of unraveling the import of gestures, appearances and actions and who is pure, efficient and of cultured family. (7:63)

अमात्येदण्डआयत्तोदण्डेवैनयिकीक्रिया।

नृपतौकोश-राष्ट्रेचदूतेसन्धि-विपर्ययौ॥ (७:६५)

He should entrust the army with the military commander and ensure humility in use of the army. He should keep the treasury and national matters under his own control and entrust diplomacy of agreement and estrangement with emissary. (7:65)

जाङ्गलेसस्य-सम्पन्नं-आर्यप्रायं-अनाविलम्।

रम्यमानत-सामन्तंस्वाजीव्यंदेशं-आवसेत्॥ (७:६९)

The king should make his subjects reside in a place which is agriculturally rich, inhabited mostly by respectable persons, free from diseases, attractive, where the neighbours are humble and where means of livelihood are available. (7:69)

साम्वत्सरिकं-आप्तैश्चराष्ट्राद्-आहारयेद्-बलिम्।

स्याच्चाम्नायपरोलोकेवर्तेतपितृवन्-नृषु॥ (७:८०)

The king through his officials should collect annual tax from his subjects following the injunctions of sastras; his behavior with subjects should be like a father. (7:80)

यदितेतुनतिष्ठेयुर्-उपायैःप्रथमैस्-त्रिभिः।

दण्डेनैवप्रसह्यैतांश्-छनकैर्-वशं-आनयेत्॥ (७:१०८)

If his enemies are not brought under control by the first three means (Sama, conciliation, Bheda, split and Dana, gift), then force should be applied; the enemies should be overpowered by light and severe punishment in that order. (7:108)

राज्ञोहिरक्षाधिकृतापरस्व्-आदायिनःशठाः।

भृत्याभवन्तिप्रायेणतेभ्योरक्षेद्-इमाःप्रजा: ॥ (७:१२३)

The police forces of the king are generally engaged in thieving others' properties and in deceit. The king should protect the subjects from them. (7:123)

येकार्यिकेभ्योऽर्थमेवगृह्णीयुःपाप-चेतसः।

तेषांसर्वस्वं-आदायराजाकुर्यात्-प्रवासनम्॥ (७:१२४)

The king should confiscate the entire holdings of those officials, who take away the wealth of their own subordinates by wrong means and exile them out of his country. (7:124)

नोच्छिन्द्याद्-आत्मनोमूलंपरेषांचाति-तृष्णया।

उच्छिन्दन्ह्य्-आत्मनोमूलं-आत्मानंतांश्चपीडयेत्॥ (७:१३९)

The king should not refrain from levying due tax on his subjects owing to a false sense of kindness, as that would cut his own roots (depletion of treasury, weakening of army etc.). Nor should he levy excessive tax due to greed, as that would cause misery to his own subjects. (7:139)

परमंयत्नं-आतिष्ठेत्-स्तेनानांनिग्रहेनृपः।

स्तेनानांनिग्रहाद्-अस्ययशोराष्ट्रंचवर्धते॥ (८:३०२)

The king should put in his best efforts in controlling and chastising thieves; control of thieves helps increase of the king's fame as well as the development of the nation. (8:302)

अभयस्यहियोदातासपूज्यःसततंनृपः।

सत्रंहिवर्धतेतस्यसदैव्-आभय-दक्षिणम्॥ (८:३०३)

That king, who confers fearlessness on his subjects, is always fit to be adored. His official life is like a continued yagna, wherein he always distributes 'dakshina' of freedom from fear to all. (8:303)

सर्वतोधर्म-षड्-भागोराज्ञोभवतिरक्षतः।

अधर्मादपिषड्-भागोभवत्यस्यह्यरक्षतः॥ (८:३०४)

The king, who protects his subjects in every way, receives one-sixth of the 'dharma' (merit) earned by them. Similarly he gets one-sixth of 'Adharma' (sin) earned by his subjects, if he fails to protect them. (8:304)

यद्-अधीतेयद्-यजतेयद्-ददातियद्-अर्चति।

तस्यषड्-भाग-भाग्-राजासम्यग्-भवतिरक्षणात्॥ (८:३०५)

By protecting his subjects well, the king receives the merit of all their good actions like study (of scriptures), yagna performed, charity offered and worship done.

यस्यस्तेनःपुरेनास्तिनान्यस्त्रीगोनदुष्टवाक्।

नसाहसिक-दण्डघ्नौसराजाशक्र-लोक-भाक्॥ (८:३८६)

The king, in whose kingdom there is no thief, no licentious man cohabiting others' wives, no person of harsh speech, no person who commits heinous crime or attacks others with weapons, goes to the world of Indra. (8:386)

मध्यंदिनेऽर्धरात्रेवाविश्रान्तोविगतक्लमः।

चिन्तयेद्-धर्म-कामा-र्थान्-सार्धंतैरेकएववा॥ (७:१५१)

He should ponder over Dharma, Artha and Kama during midday or midnight, when he is relaxed in mind and body, either in the company of his ministers, or alone. (7:151)

संधिंचविग्रहंचैवयानं-आसनं-एवच।

द्वैधीभावंसंश्रयंचषड्-गुणांश्-चिन्तयेत्-सदा॥ (७:१६०)

The king should always ponder over the six aspects of dealing with enemies: friendly treaty, maintenance of hostility, assault, indifference, division of army (for attack in steps), taking help of a mightier party. (7:160)

अनित्योविजयोयस्माद्-दृश्यतेयुध्यमानयोः।

पराजयश्चसंग्रामेतस्माद्-युद्धंविवर्जयेत्॥ (७:१९९)

As victory and defeat are both seen to be uncertain in a war, the king should avoid war as far as possible. (7:199)

एवंप्रयत्नंकुर्वीतयान-शय्या-सना-शने।

स्नानेप्रसाधनेचैवसर्वा-लंकारकेषुच॥ (७:२२०)

The king should be watchful with respect to his vehicle, bed, seat, food, bath, cosmetics and decorations. (7:220)

23. Justice by King

धर्मोविद्धस्त्व्-अधर्मेणसभांयत्रोपतिष्ठते।

शल्यंचास्यनकृन्तन्तिविद्धास्-तत्रसभासदः॥ (८:१२)

In the court of justice, where Dharma is overpowered by Adharma and the judicial members do not cut off Adharma with sword, those very members will be attacked b Adharma. (8:12)

सभांवानप्रवेष्टव्यंवक्तव्यंवासमञ्जसम्।

अब्रुवन्-विब्रुवन्वापिनरोभवतिकिल्बिषी॥ (८:१३)

One should not enter the court aimlessly; if he enters, he should speak the truth. If he keeps mum or speaks untruth, he incurs sin. (8:13)

यत्रधर्मोह्यधर्मेणसत्यंयत्र्-आनृतेनच।

हन्यतेप्रेक्षमाणानांहतास्-तत्रसभासदः॥ (८:१४)

If Dharma is overpowered by Adharma and truth by untruth before the eyes of the judicial members, those members perish.

पादोऽधर्मस्यकर्तारंपादःसाक्षिणं-ऋच्छति।

पादःसभासदःसर्वान्-पादोराजानं-ऋच्छति॥ (८:१८)

When any injustice occurs, one-fourth of the sin goes to the perpetrator of Adharma; one-fourth to the witness in the box; one-fourth to all the judicial members and one-fourth to the king. (8:18)

राजाभवत्यनेनास्तुमुच्यन्तेचसभासदः।

एनोगच्छतिकर्तारंनिन्दार्होयत्रनिन्दते॥ (८:१९)

In the court where censurable action is censured, the king as well as the judicial members become free from sin. The sin attaches only to the one who commits the censurable act. (8:19)

बाह्यैर्-विभावयेल्-लिङ्गैर्-भावं-अन्तर्गतंनृणाम्।

स्वर-वर्णेङ्गित्-आकारैश्-चक्षुषाचेष्टितेनच॥ (८:२५)

The inner truth in the accused, the defendant and the witnesses should be ascertained by examining their exterior signs like changes in sound and colour (like turning black), gestures, changes in body (like sweating), eye movements and other acts.

बाल-दायादिकंरिक्थंतावद्-राजा-नुपालयेत्।

यावत्सस्यात्-समावृत्तोयावच्चातीत-शैशवः॥ (८:२७)

The king should protect the property of a child till he comes back from Gurukula (after completing his studies) or he crosses the childhood stage (age of 16), whichever is later. (8:27)

ममेदं-इतियोब्रूयात्-सोऽनुयोज्योयथाविधि।

संवाद्यरूप-संख्यादीन्-स्वामीतद्-द्रव्यं-अर्हति॥ (८:३१)

If anyone claims a lost property etc., he should be examined properly and questioned on the shape, number etc. relating to the lost property; if the response is satisfactory, the king should restore the property back to the claimant. (8:31)

अवेदयानोनष्टस्यदेशंकालंचतत्वतः।

वर्णंरूपंप्रमाणंचतत्समंदण्डं-अर्हति॥ (८:३२)

In case the claimant is unable to specify truly the place, time, colour, shape, dimensions etc. of the lost property, he should be treated as a criminal and levied a fine equal to the value of the lost property he claims. (8:32)

प्रणष्टाधिगतंद्रव्यंतिष्ठेद्-युक्तैर्-अधिष्ठितम्।

यांस्तत्रचौरान्-गृह्णीयात्-तान्राजेभेनघातयेत्॥ (८:३४)

If some lost property is recovered by the king’s officers, the king should keep it in safe custody. The king should get the thieves, from whom it was recovered, trampled by elephants to death. (8:34)

नोत्पादयेत्-स्वयंकार्यंराजानाप्यस्यपूरुषः।

नचप्रापितं-अन्येनग्रसेद्-अर्थंकथंचन॥ (८:४३)

The king or his representative should not fictitiously create a case for getting money; nor should he dismiss a case presented by somebody for getting money by wrongful means. (8:43)

यथानयत्य्-असृक्-पातैर्-मृगस्यमृगयुःपदम्।

नयेत्-तथा-नुमानेनधर्मस्यनृपतिःपदम्।। (८:४४)

Just as a hunter traces the location of a deer by seeing the trail of blood, the king should find the bottom of dharma through inference. (8:44)

सत्यं-अर्थंचसंपश्येद्-आत्मानं-अथसाक्षिणः।

देशंरूपंचकालंचव्यवहारविधौस्थितः॥ (८:४५)

The king should weigh all aspects including truth, wealth, own self (fear of attaining naraka by wrong judgement), witnesses, place, shape, time and magnitude of crime. (8:45)

अर्थेऽपव्ययमानंतुकरणेनविभावितम्।

दापयेद्-धनिकस्य्-आर्थंदण्डलेशंचशक्तितः॥ (८:५१)

If the borrower denies and yet his borrowing has been proved, the king should order the borrower to pay and also punish him for deceit. (8:51)

अदेश्यंयश्चदिशतिनिर्दिश्या-पह्नुतेचयः।

यश्चा-धरोत्त्रान्-अर्थान्-विगीतान्-नावबुध्यते॥ (८:५३)

If a plaintiff mentions a place where the transaction took place and finally it is proved that the borrower could not have been present there; he issues inconsistent statements.. (8:53)

अपदिश्या-पदेश्यंचपुनर्-यस्त्व्-अपधावति।

सम्यक्-प्रणिहितंचार्थंपृष्टःसन्-नाभिनन्दति।। (८:५४)

If the plaintiff contradicts his own previous statement; he fails to substantiate his point during cross-examination.. (8:54)

असंभाष्येसाक्षिभिश्चदेशेसंभाषतेमिथः।

निरुच्यमानंप्रश्नंचनेच्छेद्-यश्चापिनिष्पतेत्॥ (८:५५)

If the plaintiff converses with the witnesses in an unexpected secluded corner; scoffs at being asked questions; flees from his place.. (8:55)

ब्रूही-त्युक्तश्चनब्रूयादुक्तंचनविभावयेत्।

नचपूर्वापरंविद्यात्-तस्माद्-अर्थात्-सहीयते॥ (८:५६)

If he does not speak when questioned; does not explain what he has already stated; does not know the causes and effects and hence varies from his position.. (8:56)

साक्षिणःसन्तिमे-त्युक्त्वादिशे-त्युक्त्वादिशेन्नयः।

धर्मस्थःकारणैर्-एतैर्-हीनंतमपिनिर्दिशेत्॥ (८:५७)

If he claims that there are witnesses, but, when asked to produce them, fails; the judge established in dharma should dismiss his claim in all the above cases. (8:57)

अभियोक्तानचेद्-ब्रूयाद्-बध्योदण्ड्यश्चधर्मतः।

नचेत्-त्रिपक्षात्-प्रब्रूयाद्-धर्मंप्रतिपराजित : ॥ (८:५८)

If the plaintiff does not substantiate his claim, he should be imprisoned or fined (depending on the gravity of the crime). If the defendant does not submit his supporting statements of defence within three fortnights, he should be treated as having failed in dharma. (8:58)

योयावन्-निह्नुवीयार्थंमिथ्यायावतिवावदेत्।

तौनृपेणह्यधर्मज्ञौदाप्यौतद्-द्विगुणंदमम्॥ (८:५९)

If the borrower pleads that he has borrowed less than what the lender claims, or if the lender claims more than what the borrower borrowed, these two parties, who knowingly indulged in Adharma, should be fined double the difference. (8:59)

नार्थ-संबन्धिनोनाप्तानसहायानवैरिणः।

नदृष्टदोषाःकर्तव्यानव्याध्यार्तानदूषिताः॥ (८:६४)

Witnesses related monetarily to the plaintiff, his friends, his assistants, foes, diseased or convicted persons should not be allowed to testify as witness. (8:64)

नार्तोनमत्तोनोन्मत्तोनक्षुत्-तृषो-पपीडितः।

नश्रमार्तोनकामार्तोनक्रुद्धोनापितस्करः॥ (८:६७)

A miserable, intoxicated, insane, suffering from hunger or thirst, extremely tired, lustful, angry person or thief should not be allowed to testify as witness. (8:67)

सत्यंसाक्ष्येब्रुवन्-साक्षीलोकान्-आप्नोतिपुष्कलान्।

इहचानुत्तमांकीर्तिंवागेषाब्रह्मपूजिता॥ (८:८१)

A witness who testifies truth attains superior realms (like Brahmaloka) and unsurpassed fame in this world also, as truthful speech is adored even by Brahma. (8:84)

साक्ष्येऽनृतंवदन्-पाशैर्-बध्यतेवारुणैर्-भृशम्।

विवशःशतमाजातीस्-तस्मात्-साक्ष्यंवदेद्-ऋतम्॥ (८:८२)

A witness who testifies falsely is tied severely with ropes of Varuna (snakes) and, suffering from dropsy, is thrown into hells for one hundred births. Hence one should always speak truth while testifying as witness. (8:82)

यस्मिन्-यस्मिन्-विवादेतुकौटसाक्ष्यंकृतंभवेत्।

तत्तत्-कार्यंनिवर्तेतकृतंचाप्यकृतंभवेत्॥ (८:११७)

In disputes where it is established that witnesses have spoken untruth, those cases should be reopened as if they were fresh cases, completely annulling all previous proceedings. (8:117)

लोभान्-मोहाद्-भयान्-मैत्रात्-कामात्-क्रोधात्-तथैवच।

अज्ञानाद्-बालभावाच्चसाक्ष्यंवितथं-उच्यते॥ (८:११८)

The statement of a witness motivated by greed, improper understanding, fear, friendship, lust, anger, ignorance and childishness is taken to be false. (8:118)

अदण्ड्यान्-दण्डयन्-राजादण्ड्यान्श्चैवाप्य्-अदण्डयन्।

अयशोमहद्-आप्नोतिनरकंचैवगच्छति॥ (८:१२८)

If the king punishes innocent persons and fails to punish the guilty, he is subject to great infamy in this world and finally attains to hell. (8:128)

योयस्यप्रतिभूस्-तिष्ठेद्-दर्शनायेहमानवः।

अदर्शयन्-सतंतस्यप्रयच्छेत्-स्वधनाद्-ऋणम्॥ (८:१५८)

If a guarantor fails to produce the borrower before the court, he should pay the debt out of his own funds. (8:158)

मत्तोन्मत्तार्ताध्यधीनैर्-बालेनस्थविरेणवा।

असंबद्ध-कृतश्चैवव्यवहारोनसिद्ध्यति॥ (८:१६३)

If a person, who is intoxicated, mad or grief-stricken, a servant, child or a very aged person enters into a transaction without the consent of his family members, the claim in such a case is not maintainable. (8:163)

ग्रहीतायदिनष्टःस्यात्-कुटुम्बार्थेकृतोव्ययः।

दातव्यंबान्धवैस्-तत्-स्यात्-प्रविभक्तैरपिस्वतः॥ (८:१६६)

If a person borrows money in order to maintain his undivided family and dies before he repays, the survivors, even though partitioned and living separately, should clear the debt. (8:166)

नान्यद्-अन्येनसंसृष्ट-रूपंविक्रयं-अर्हति।

नचासारंनचन्यूनंनदूरेणतिरोहितम्॥ (८:२०३)

The following commodities should not be allowed for sale: material mixed with a different (specially less valuable) one; material without essence; less in

weight or quantity; that which cannot be seen properly due to distance or darkness or other obstacles. (8:203)

वनस्पतीनांसर्वेषां-उपभोगंयथायथा।

तथातथादमःकार्योहिंसायां-इतिधारणा॥ (८:२८५)

It is established that depending on the type of usefulness of the tree one cuts, the punishment should be meted out. (The fruit tree ranks highest, the flower tree next, followed by creepers, plants etc. and the last rank being of grass etc.)

मनुष्याणांपशूनांचदुःखायप्रहृतेसति।

यथायथामहद्-दुःखंदण्डंकुर्यात्-तथातथा॥ (८:२८६)

When one harms humans and animals physically, the punishment should vary with the intensity of misery caused to the victim. (8:286)

येनयेनयथाङ्गेनस्तेनोनृषुविचेष्टते।

तत्तदेवहरेत्-तस्यप्रत्यादेशायपार्थिवः॥ (८:३३४)

Whatever limbs a thief uses in stealing something and in whatever ways he does it, the king should get those limbs cut off from his body in the same manner. (8:334)

नाततायि-वधेदोषोहन्तुर्-भवतिकश्चन।

प्रकाशंवाऽप्रकाशंवामन्युस्-तंमन्युं-ऋच्छति॥ (८:३५१)

There is no sin attached to the killer of one who commits heinous crime, whether he kills the criminal in the open or in secret; the anger of the criminal provokes the anger of the defender. (8:351)

पर-दारा-भिमर्शेषुप्रवृत्तान्-नॄन्-महीपतिः।

उद्वेजन-करैर्-दण्डैश्-चिह्नयित्वाप्रवासवेत्॥ (८:३५२)

In the case of those who cohabit other people’s wives, the king should award punishment of severe torture, making repulsive marks on their body and exile them.

भर्तारंलङ्घयेद्-यातुस्त्रीज्ञाति-गुण-दर्पिता।

तांश्वभिःखादयेद्-राजासंस्थानेबहुसंस्थिते॥ (८:३७१)

In the case of woman, who disobeys her husband (and seeks other men’s company) out of pride in her relatives or her own qualities (like beauty etc.), the king should let dogs eat her in a public place in the presence of many. (9:371)

पुमांसंदाहयेत्-पापंशयनेतप्तआयसे।

अभ्यादध्युश्चकाष्ठानितत्रदह्येतपापकृत्॥ (८:३७२)

A man, who is licentious, should be burnt on a bed of hot iron by heaping wood on top of him and setting fire. (8:372)

नमातानपितानस्त्रीनपुत्रस्-त्यागं-अर्हति।

त्यजन्न-पतितान्-एतान्-राज्ञादण्ड्यःशतानिषट्॥ (८:३८९)

Nobody should abandon his mother, father, wife or son. One, who abandons any of them without any fault, should be fined six hundred 'Panas' (coins) by the king. (8:389)

स्त्री-बाल्-ऑन्मत्त-वृद्धानांदरिद्राणांचरोगिणाम्।

शिफा-विदल-रज्ज्वाद्यैर्-विदध्यान्-नृपतिर्-दमम्॥ (९:२३०)

The king should, if required, punish even women, children and mad, aged, poor and diseased persons by use of whip, cane, rope etc. (9:230)

तीरितंचानुशिष्टंचयत्रक्वचनयद्-भवेत्।

कृतंतद्-धर्मतोविद्यान्नतद्भूयोनिवर्तयेत्॥ (९:२३३)

The king should never take up for review whatever judgment already passed or whatever punishment decided in accordance with dharma. (9:233)

द्विविधांस्-तस्करान्-विद्यात्-परद्रव्या-पहारकान्।

प्रकाशांश्चा-प्रकाशांश्चचारचक्षुर्-महीपतिः॥ (९:२५६)

There are two types of thieves, who steal others' wealth: those who do it in the open and those who operate clandestinely; the king should learn about them through his spies, who are like his own eyes. (9:256)

नहोढेनविनाचौरंघातयेद्-धार्मिकोनृपः।

सहोढंसोपकरणंघातयेद्-अविचारयन्॥ (९:२७०)

A virtuous king should not kill a thief without proper evidence of the stolen material etc; if he gets evidence of stolen material, the tool used etc., he should kill the thief without second thought. (9:270)

ग्रामेष्वपिचयेकेचिच्-चौराणाम्भक्तदायकाः।

भाण्डावकाशदाश्चैवसर्वांस्-तानपिघातयेत्॥ (९:२७१)

In the villages also those who help the thieves by providing them food, shelter or instruments helpful in their crime, should all be heavily punished by the king. (9:271)

राष्ट्रेषुरक्षाधिकृतान्-सामन्तांश्चैवचोदितान्।

अभ्याघातेषुमध्यस्थाञ्-छिष्या-च्चौरानिवद्रुतम्॥ (९:२७२)

When those who have been appointed to protect the state (police etc.) and those who live in borders of the country connive with thieves, they should be punished quickly in like manner as thieves themselves. (9:272)

राज्ञःकोषापहर्तॄंश्चप्रतिकूलेषुचस्थितान्।

घातयेद्-विविधैर्-दण्डैर्-अरीणांचोपजापकान्॥ (९:२७५)

Those who steal from the royal treasury, work against the nation and communicate secretly with state's enemies and increase the enmity should all be punished in different ways (depending on severity of the crime, various limbs of the body should be dismembered). (9:275)

संधिंछित्वातुयेचौर्यंरात्रौकुर्वन्तितस्कराः।

तेषांछित्वानृपोहस्तौतीक्ष्णेशूलेनिवेशयेत्॥ (९:२७६)

The king should cut off the hands of those, who make openings in walls during night and commit theft and put them on sharp lance. (9:276)

अंगुलीर्-ग्रन्थि-भेदस्यछेदयेत्-प्रथमेग्रहे।

द्वितीयेहस्त-चरणौतृतीयेवधं-अर्हति॥ (९:२७७)

The fingers of a pickpocket should be cut off during his arrest after his first offence; his hands and feet should be cut off during his second arrest; he should be killed if he is arrested for that offence for the third time. (9:277)

कोष्ठागार-युधागार-देवतागार-भेदकान्।

हस्त्य्-अश्व-रथ-हर्तॄंश्चहन्यादेवा-विचारयन्॥ (९:२८०)

Without second thought the king should kill those who break into and steal from state treasury or godown or temples, and those who steal elephants, horses, chariots etc. (9:280)

चिकित्सकानांसर्वेषांमिथ्याप्रचरतांदमः।

अमानुषेषुप्रथमोमानुषेषुतुमध्यमः॥ (९:२८४)

Fake doctors who go about treating patients should be punished; in case of treatment of animals the first level of punishment and, in case of humans, the middle level of punishment should be given. (9:284)

बन्धनानिचसर्वाणिराजमार्गेनिवेशयेत्।

दुःखितायस्यदृश्येरन्-विकृताःपापकारिणः॥ (९:२८८)

The king should erect prisons right close to the highway, so that the sinners in misery and in bad condition can be seen by others outside. (9:288)

प्राकारस्यचभेत्तारंपरिखाणांचपूरकम्।

द्वाराणांचैवभङ्क्तारंक्षिप्रमेवप्रवासयेत्॥ (९:२८९)

The king should exile from the country those who break into ramparts, fill in the trenches with muck and break the gates. (9:289)

24. Vanaprastha

स्थलजौ-दक-शाकानिपुष्प-मूल-फलानिच।

मेध्य-वृक्षो-द्भवान्-यद्यात्-स्नेहांश्चफल-संभवान्॥ (६:१३)

The prescribed eatables in Vanaprastha stage: vegetables grown on earth or in water, flowers, roots and fruits from sacred trees (fit for yagnas) and fat derived from fruits. (6:13)

भूमौविपरिवर्तेततिष्टेद्वाप्रपदैर्-दिनम्।

स्थाना-सनाभ्यांविहरेत्-सवनेषू-पयन्-नपः॥ (६:२२)

He should lie down on bare earth and stand on his toes or walk for a while on toes around the same place. He should take bath thrice a day. (6:22)

ग्रीष्मेपञ्च-तपास्तुस्याद्- वर्षास्-वभ्रा-वकाशिकः।

आर्द्र-वासास्तुहेमन्तेक्रमशोवर्धयंस्-तपः॥ (६:२३)

In summer he should be in the middle of five fires (four in four directions and fifth being Sun above). During rainy season he should be in the open. In winter he should wear wet clothes. He should intensify his penance gradually. (6:23)

अप्रयत्नःसुखार्थेषुब्रह्मचारीधराशयः।

शरणेष्-वममश्चैववृक्ष-मूल-निकेतनः॥ (६:२६)

He should make no efforts for bodily comforts (including tasty food), observe strict celibacy, sleep on bare earth, remain unattached to any shelter and live at the foot of tree. (6:26)

25. Sanyasa

अतिवादांस्-तितिक्षेतनावमन्येतकंचन।

नचेमंदेहं-आश्रित्यवैरंकुर्वीतकेनचित्॥ (६:४७)

A Sanyasi should tolerate even the extremely unpalatable utterances (of an adversary) and should not disrespect anyone. For the sake of this mortal coil (including mind and intellect), he should not develop enmity with anyone. (6:47)

अध्यात्म-रतिर्-आसीनोनिरपेक्षोनिरामिषः।

आत्मनैवसहायेनसुखार्थीविचरेदिह॥ (६:४९)

He should always contemplate on Brahman, seated in conducive asanas, should have no expectations and desire in mundane objects (including food) and, supported by his own body and will, should move about in this world, desirous of attaining Liberation. (6:49)

अल्पान्नाभ्यवहारेणरहःस्थान-आसनेनच।

ह्नियमाणानिविषयैर्-इन्द्रियाणिनिवर्तयेत्॥ (६:५९)

By taking spartan food and spending his time in a secluded place, he should bridle his sense-organs from indulging in objects. (6:59)

देहाद्-उत्क्रमणंचास्मात्-पुनर्-गर्भेचसंभवम्।

योनि-कोटि-सहस्रेषुसृतीश्चास्य्-आन्तरात्मनः॥ (६:६३)

He should contemplate on his jivatma leaving this (temporary) body, entering into a womb again and being born thousands of crores of times. (6:63)

26. Gnana

इहचामुत्रवाकाम्यंप्रवृत्तंकर्मकीर्त्यते।

निष्कामंज्ञानपूर्वंतुनिवृत्तं-उपदिश्यते॥ (१२:८९)

Action performed with mundane or heavenly pleasures in view is known as ‘Pravritti’ karma (karma leading to repeated births); action performed without any desire in mind and accompanied by True knowledge is called ‘Nivritti’ karma (karma leading one away from cycle of births and towards Liberation). (12:89)

प्रवृत्तंकर्मसंसेव्यदेवानामेतिसाम्यताम्।

निवृत्तंसेवमानस्तुभूतान्य्-अत्येतिपञ्चवै॥ (१२:९०)

By performing ‘Pravritta’ karmas (of the meritorious dharmic type), one attains position equal to gods. By performing ‘Nivritta’ karmas, one goes beyond the five elements (and attains Liberation). (12:90)

सर्वभूतेषुचात्मानंसर्वभूतानिचात्मनि।

समंपश्यन्-आत्मयाजीस्वाराज्यं-अधिगच्छति॥ (१२:९१)

One who perceives his own self in all beings and all beings in his own self, attains equanimity of vision and, by complete surrender to Atma, he attains the status of the Supreme. (12:91)

यथाजातबलोवह्निर्-दहत्य्-आर्द्रानपिद्रुमान्।

तथादहतिवेदज्ञःकर्मजंदोषं-आत्मनः॥ (१२:१०१)

Just as fire, which has attained strength, burns away even wet trees, the knower of Vedas burns away faults in himself arising during karma. (12:101)

प्रत्यक्षंचानुमानंचशास्त्रंचविविध्-आगमम्।

त्रयंसुविदितंकार्यंधर्म-शुद्धिं-अभीप्सता॥ (१२:१०५)

One, who wishes for purity in dharmic acts undertaken by him, should establish the correct dharma through three authorities: direct knowledge, inference, and Sastras and different Agamas. (12:105)

एकाकीचिन्तयेन्-नित्यंविविक्तेहितं-आत्मनः।

एकाकीचिन्तयानोहिपरंश्रेयो-धिगच्छति॥ (४:२५८)

Sitting alone in a secluded place, one should always contemplate on his ultimate good. Such contemplation will lead him to the state of supreme beatitude. (4:258)

आत्मैवदेवताःसर्वाःसर्वं-आत्मन्य्-अवस्थितम्।

आत्माहिजनयत्य्-एषांकर्म-योगंशरीरिणाम्॥ (१२:११९)

Atma is indeed all gods; everything is seated in Atma. It is Atma, who creates the bond of jivas with actions. (12:119)

खंसन्निवेशयेत्-खेषुचेष्टन-स्पर्शनेऽनिलम्।

पक्ति-दृष्ट्योःपरंतेजःस्नेहऽपोगांचमूर्तिषु॥ (१२:१२०)

The Yogi should absorb the outer space in the space in his body; the outer air in the inner air which helps in his activities of touch etc.; the brilliance of Agni and Surya in his eyes; the outer waters in the waters in his body; the outer earth element in the solid part of his body. (12:120)

मनसीन्दुंदिशःश्रोत्रेक्रान्तेविष्णुंबलेहरम्।

वाच्यग्निंमित्रं-उत्सर्गेप्रजनेचप्रजापतिम्॥ (१२:१२१)

The Yogi should absorb Chandra in his mind; directions in his ears; Vishnu in his feet; Hara in his strength; Agni in his speech (mouth); Mitra in his excretive organ; Prajapati in his generative organ. (12:121)

संयग्-दर्शन-संपन्नःकर्मभिर्-ननिबद्ध्यते।

दर्शनेनविहीनस्तुसंसारंप्रतिपद्यते॥ (६:७४)

One who has attained Supreme Vision (Self-realisation) is not shackled by karmas. One who has failed to attain this vision is born in this world again and again. (6:74)

अस्थि-स्थूणंस्नायु-युतंमांस-शोणित-लेपनम्।

चर्मा-वनद्धंदुर्गन्धिपूर्णंमूत्र-पुरीषयोः॥ (६:७६)

जरा-शोक-समाविष्टंरोगायतनं-आतुरम्।

रजस्वलं-अनित्यंचभूतावासं-इमंत्यजेत्॥ (६:७७)

One should shed all attachment to this body, built on pillars of bones, tendons connecting muscles with bones, smeared with flesh and blood, covered by skin, full of bad smell of urine and excreta, overpowered by old age and sorrow, home of various diseases, suffering from wants (hunger, thirst, cold, heat etc.), leading to rajoguna (action prompted by desire, anger, greed etc.), impermanent and made of the five elements. (6:76, 77)

प्रियेषुस्वेषुसुकृतं-अप्रियेषुचदुष्कृतम्।

विसृज्यध्यान-योगेनब्रह्माभ्येतिसनातनम्॥ (६:७९)

One should leave his good deeds with his friends and evil deeds with enemies and attain the eternal Brahman through the yoga of meditation. (The fruits of good and evil deeds do not accompany the Self-realised soul on his dropping the body, unlike in the case of ordinary humans; but they go respectively to his friends and foes). (6:79)

प्रशासितारंसर्वेषां-अणीयांसं-अणोरपि।

रुक्माभंस्वप्नधीगम्यंविद्यात्तंपुरुषंपरम्॥ (१२:१२२)

He should meditate on the Supreme Lord as the controller of all (including Indra, Surya et al), subtler than the subtlest (to perceive the Lord’s omnipresence), of the hue of gold and capable of perception in the subtle inner sense organ (Antahkarana). (12:122)

एतं-एकेवदन्त्य्-अग्निंमनुं-अन्येप्रजापतिम्।

इन्द्रं-एकेपरेप्राणं-अपरेब्रह्मशाश्वतम्॥ (१२:१२३)

Some call the Supreme Lord as Agni; some as Manu and Prajapati; some as Indra; some as Prana and others as the Eternal Brahman. (12:123)

एषसर्वाणिभूतानिपञ्चभिर्-व्याप्यमूर्तिभिः।

जन्म-वृद्धि-क्षयैर्-नित्यंसंसारयतिचक्रवत्॥ (१२:१२४)

This Paramatma pervades all beings in their bodies made of the five elements and rotates them continuously in the wheel of samsara of birth, growth and death. (12:124)

एवंयःसर्व-भूतेषुपश्यत्य्-आत्मानं-आत्मना।

ससर्व-समतां-एत्यब्रह्माभ्येतिपरंपदम्॥ (१२:१२५)

One, who perceives Atma in all beings through his own Atma, attains equanimity in all creation and ultimately attains to the state of Supreme Brahman. (12:125)

Appendix: An Essay on Ten Fundamental Virtues

Society consists of individuals. As the individuals are, so the society is. Individual good leads to societal or public good. Hence all societies all over the world have enforced codes of morality, dos and don'ts on individuals. In Indian tradition, the term 'Dharma' denotes this code of conduct for individuals, while also pointing to its being the support of society.

Mahabharata defines Dharma: "धारणात्धर्मइत्याहुःधर्मोधारयतिप्रजाः"- Dharma is so called because it supports the individual and the society. Yaksha Prasna in Mahabharata points to the need to follow the traditions of Dharma established by the leaders of society.

"तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठःश्रुतयोविभिन्नानैकोमुनिर्यस्यमतंप्रमाणम्।

धर्मस्यतत्वंनिहितंगुहायांमहाजनोयेनगतःसपन्थाः॥"

"There is no finality to intellectual reasoning. The Smritis are conflicting. No one sage's view is authoritative. The principle of Dharma is hidden and subtle. The only way is to follow the way of great men." Yaksha Prasna also highlights the supreme importance of adherence to Dharma.

"धर्मएवहतोहन्तिधर्मोरक्षतिरक्षितः।

तस्मात्धर्मंनत्यजामिमानोधर्मोहतोऽवधीत्॥"

"Dharma, when destroyed (not observed), destroys us. Dharma, when protected, protects us. Therefore I shall not abandon Dharma. Let not Dharma destroy us."

As per our scriptures, Dharma is intertwined with Varna and Asrama. There is however a basic essential moral structure, a web of virtues, applicable compulsorily to each and every individual irrespective of Varna and Asrama. In fact it has been said that rituals observed in violation of these morality requirements do not bear the expected fruit. This mandatory set of morals is known by various names, Samanya Dharma, Sadharana Dharma, Atma guna, Seelam etc. Manu the great codifier of laws in his Manusmriti lists ten basic characteristics of Dharma.

“धृतिःक्षमादमोऽस्तेयंशौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः।

धीर्विद्यासत्यं-अक्रोधोदशकंधर्मलक्षणम्॥“ (6:92)

“Steadfastness, forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, control of sense-organs, application of intellect, self-knowledge, truthfulness, freedom from anger – these constitute the tenfold aspects of virtue.” All Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas have referred to these basic virtues enshrined in the Vedas and expanded and expatiated on them. Manu’s list of ten virtues however is found to encompass beautifully the various expositions in the texts.

Steadfastness

Man achieves nothing in his life if he does not practise with steadfastness the lofty principles he wishes to follow. Mere pedantic knowledge may push one up for a short time in the eyes of the public; but it is only steadfastness in conduct that will prevent him from going astray at critical times when his actions are put to test. All great souls have reached their goals only by firmly following the path of righteousness and not by giving in to temptations or by caring for the uninformed views of the public. When they were face to face with Bhagavan, they begged not for the fleeting wealth and fame of the world, but only for eternal Bhakti at His lotus feet. Prahlada was the only one in Hiranyakasipu’s vast kingdom to worship Narayana. Despite physical, mental and psychological torture of the worst kind, his faith in God did not waver even for a second, but only flourished further.

The term ‘Dhriti’, in addition to steadfastness, also means fortitude. The courage displayed by the young boy Prahlada in the most adverse circumstances is exemplary. Similarly Meerabai in recent times not only bore all difficulties with fortitude, but her devotion to Krishna only increased. She even drank poison without batting an eyelid. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna insists on ‘Dhriti’ to keep the mind, breath and sense-organs under control in order to achieve Unity with the Supreme.

Forgiveness

We have to learn to forgive our worst enemies. Vedanta teaches that there is none who is inimical to us; it is only our past actions that come back to haunt us using the instrument of persons or circumstances which we perceive as inimical. Practice of forgiveness helps in widening of vision, leading to realization of oneness in the whole creation. 'Kshama' includes forbearance and compassion. Once Devas, men and Asuras went to Prajapati and requested Upadesa. Prajapati instructed Devas by uttering only one letter 'द'. He repeated the same instruction to men and Asuras. The three groups on deliberation concluded that what Prajapati meant was 'दया' for Asuras, 'दानम्' for men and 'दमः' for Devas. These are the three qualities, which the groups lacked and were therefore instructed to cultivate. Compassion 'Daya' embraces 'Danam', charity also. Rama fought a bitter battle with Ravana. One day Ravana's army including his own chariot and charioteer were all destroyed. He stood all alone in the battleground. Rama could have easily killed him at that time. But magnanimous as he was, Rama permitted Ravana to leave for the day, rest in his palace and return the next day fully armed. We find the same story repeating in the battle of Skanda with the Asura Surapadma. Saints have ever been forgiving. Once robbers attacked Ramana Maharshi's Ashram in the night. Before decamping with the minor belongings of the ashram and the inmates, the robbers rained blows on the Maharshi, perhaps out of exasperation at not finding any valuables. Later the Maharshi told his disciples: "Devotees bring offerings like fruits to me. The robber-devotees offered me blows." In our literature the role model for forbearance is Earth. The Tamil saint Tiruvalluvar says: "Like the earth, which supports even those who cut it open, one should forgive those who insult him."

Self-restraint

The term 'Dama' also embraces 'Sama' here. Constant exposure to objects, combined with the onrush of Vasanas, latent tendencies, influences the mind. Speech and action follow accordingly. The mind needs to be under continuous surveillance and control. The insatiable desire for objects and pleasures has to be checked. There is a saying in Puranas:

'यत्पृथिव्यांव्रीहियवंहिरण्यंपशवःस्त्रियः।

एकस्यापिनपर्याप्तं-इतिमत्वाशमंव्रजेत्॥'

"All the foodgrains, gold, cattle and women in the whole world are not adequate for even one man (to satisfy his desire). Thinking thus, one should control the mind." Without control of desires for worldly objects, one cannot make any progress on the spiritual path; even his mundane life will be devoid

of peace. Ramana Maharshi recounts a story from Yoga Vasishtam in this context. There was a mahout who was always very cruel with his elephant. One day as he was unfettering the elephant, the mahout slipped and fell to the ground. Here was a chance for the elephant to trample upon and kill the mahout. But the kind-hearted elephant spared his life and escaped into the forest. The wicked mahout, instead of feeling thankful to the elephant, felt bad that it had cheated him and run away. He located the elephant after a long search in the forest and dug a deep pit in that area. The elephant fell into the pit and died. The human mind is like the mahout in the story.

In view of his high religious merit and suitability King Nahusha was appointed Devendra in the latter's absence. He became power-drunk and lusted after Indrani. On the advice of Indra, who was in hiding in a lotus stem in Manasarovar lake, Indrani cleverly asked Nahusha to come to her palace in a palanquin carried by the revered Saptarishis. Nahusha, blinded with lust, lost no time in ordering the very Sapatarishis, who had anointed him Devendra, to carry his palanquin. Sage Agastya, being dwarf, had difficulty in keeping pace with the other Rishis and this made Nahusha's journey slow. An agitated Nahusha knocked the sage with his foot and cried 'sarpa-sarpa', meaning 'quick-quick'. The sage cursed him to become a 'sarpa', snake. Immediately the king fell from Swarga on to earth in the form of a python. One has to constantly remember:
"आशाहिपरमंदुःखंनैराश्यंपरमंसुखम्"- Desire is supreme misery; detachment is the peak of happiness.

Non-stealing

The term 'Astheyam' literally means non-stealing, but it connotes a much wider spectrum of virtues. It includes abstention from unlawful gain and, ultimately non-covetousness of possessions beyond one's minimum essential needs. Uncontrolled desire leads in time to insatiable greed. A greedy man thinks nothing of violating laws and morality to get what he wants. Sastras do not discourage accumulation of wealth per se; but the means of acquisition has to be scrupulously fair. Sastras certainly prohibit ostentation and wasteful expenditure and encourage giving in charity to deserving persons. Charity helps in purification of mind and elimination of 'Ahankara' and 'Mamakara', the sense of doership and possessiveness. For this purpose Ishta and Poortha dharmas are highly recommended in our ancient texts. Ishta dharma refers to conducting Yagnas, Poojas, religious discourses etc. for the general well-being of the public. Poortha dharma covers provision of roads, temples, Annasatras, water supply etc. for public convenience. The kings of old were role models in performing these dharmas for the wealthy citizens to follow. Rama gave away the Vanara kingdom in Kishkindha to Sugriva and the Rakshasa kingdom in Lanka to Vibhishana. Rama never thought of annexing

those kingdoms under his own rule. King Sivaji regularly placed all the lands won by him in battle at the feet of his master Samartha Ramadas. The Guru returned the lands to Sivaji and instructed him to rule righteously. In twentieth century Visvesvarayya, the Diwan of Mysore, had separate pens and ink-bottles for official and personal use.

Purity

Purity is threefold- in body, words and thoughts. Sastras emphasize bodily purity- bath, washing of hands, feet, mouth etc. - as it influences mental purity. Stress is also laid on purity of food and drink. Impure thoughts form the basis of impure words. One impure thought will generate a train of such thoughts. Chanakya says:

“वाचांशौचंचमनसःशौचं-इन्द्रियनिग्रहः।

सर्वभूतदयाशौचं-एतच्छौचंपरार्थिनाम्॥“

“Purity in words, control of sense-organs and mind, compassion towards all beings - all this constitutes the purity of those who want to reach the Supreme.” Purity comprises cleanliness, straightforwardness, frankness, innocence and freedom from envy, pride and malice. If we look closely at the stories of sages Viswamitra and Vasishtha, we find it was purity that made the difference between the two in the initial stages. After Viswamitra purified himself through further severe penances, he was declared a Brahmarishi. In Puranas, we find that the penances performed by Asuras were generally more intense than those of Devas. But Asuras never got rid of impurities. Hence though they came to wield immense powers through the boons they obtained, they had to finally bite the dust. In Mahabharata, in Yaksha Prasna, it transpires that four Pandavas lost their lives after drinking water from a pond. When the Yaksha asks Yudhishthira to choose one of the dead brothers with offer of restoration to life, Yudhishthira chose Nakula. Dharmaputra explained: ‘Bhima, Arjuna and I are the sons of mother Kunti. Nakula and Sahadeva are the sons of my step-mother Madri. If I survive among Kunti’s sons, let it be Nakula to continue Madri’s line.’ Such was the purity of Yudhishthira. Later when the five Pandavas and Draupadi started on their ascent to heaven, all fell on the way except Yudhishthira, who travelled to heaven in the chariot brought by Indra.

Control of sense-organs

In a famous verse in Vivekachudamani, Sankaracharya says:

“शब्दादिभिःपञ्चभिरेवपञ्चपञ्चत्वमापुःस्वगुणेनबद्धाः।

कुरङ्ग-मातङ्ग-पतङ्ग-मीन-भृङ्गानरःपञ्चभिरञ्चितःकिम्॥“

“The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and the honey-bee - these five are annihilated because of their slavery to one or the other of the senses such as

sound etc. What then is the condition of the man, who is attached to all these five?" If you do not control sense-organs, you cannot control temptations. Temptations and Vasanas, latent tendencies, strengthen each other. Temptations have the power to shake the mind and the intellect by their roots and lead them to destruction. One subject repeatedly highlighted in Bhagavad Gita and other Sastras is control of sense-organs. The rules of conduct laid down for various Asramas are founded on this virtue. These rules are meant to discipline the mind running after sense-organs. In the Puranas, all Asuras met their end because of their unbridled sense-organs. Ravana, Sumbha and Nisumbha were overcome by lust for women. Madhu, Kaitabha, Mahishasura, Hiranyaksha, Hiranyakasipu and Kamsa were all mad after power over kingdoms. In order to stress the level of difficulty in acquiring control of sense-organs, even sages like Kasyapa, Viswamitra, Narada and Markandeya in the distant past are shown as not immune to the temptations of Maya. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa led an incredibly pious life in the recent nineteenth century. He treated his own wife, Sarada Devi as incarnation of Bhagavati. He performed 'Shodasi' Pooja to her. Saints like him rise above body-consciousness.

Intellect

Man, unlike animals, is endowed with intellect, the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong. Though mind is only one and comprises only thoughts, it is considered in four functional parts - mind, intellect, chitta (memory) and Ahamkara (sense of 'I'). Mind may come under the sway of transient emotions; it is for the intellect to control the mind and bring it on to the right path. Intellect grows through 'swadhyaya', study of scriptures, visits to sacred places and, above all, company of the virtuous and holy. Clarity of thinking and strong conviction are the hallmarks of a well developed intellect. Chitta is the storehouse of reference material, again thoughts, which the intellect draws upon. Sankaracharya is perhaps the greatest example of such an intellectual. He defeated all his opponents including advocates of Buddhism, Jainism and deviant forms of Hinduism like Kapalikas etc. through cogent, logical arguments. He fought Mandana Misra on 'Purva Mimamsa', the philosophy that placed undue emphasis on rituals without insisting on bhakti. The celebrated debate lasted twentyone days and nights at a stretch. Even in Upanishadic times, the debates of sages like Yagnavalkya, Ashtavakra et al are well known. The sixty three Saivite Nayanmar saints of Tamil Nadu defeated Jainism roundly even when kings had adopted those religions and in the face of strong opposition. Chanakya praises intellect:

"नयत्रास्तिगतिर्वायोरश्मीनांचविवस्वतः।

तत्रापिप्रविशत्याशुबुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतांसदा॥"

"Where air and sun's rays cannot enter, there the intellect of the wise always penetrates quickly." Decisions should never be taken in haste. The intellect

should be used to recollect Sastras and incidents from the lives of great savants for utilizing in the situation it currently faces. Application of intellect should lead to discrimination of the real and the unreal. Discrimination should lead to detachment.

Self-Knowledge

"Vidya' in the ordinary sense means knowledge of any subject. The reference here is to 'Self-Knowledge'. Deep application of intellect should lead to thirst for self-knowledge, 'तत्वज्ञान'. Once the intellect has sifted the eternal from the transient, interest on knowing about the changeless truth should grow. Upanishads declare: "याविद्यासाविमुक्तये" - "Knowledge is that which results in Mukti, Liberation." As discrimination and detachment ripen, the aspirant starts seeing the entire creation as manifestation of God. He sees God as 'सुहृत्सर्वभूतानाम्'- the well wisher of all beings. No one is his enemy now. He develops 'समदर्शनम्' - equanimity in outlook. He has lost 'otherness' completely. He eventually experiences the light of God in his own heart. He no longer needs any external support, as he is rooted in the Self. He does not care for pleasure and pain. Bodily and mental afflictions do not touch him. Ramana Maharshi underwent very painful surgery for sarcoma in his arm without any anesthesia.

The scriptures recommend Sanyasa Ashrama as the most suitable for gaining Self-knowledge. Sankaracharya became a Sanyasi full of thirst for Knowledge at the age of eight. For a householder, to rise above family attachments is very tough. King Janaka is an oft-quoted exception. One day, he was listening to a lecture on Vedanta by sage Yagnavalkya. Eager to let the other students know of Janaka's greatness, the Guru created an illusion of fire in the palace. All the students except Janaka left the class in fear and went to find out what had happened. Janaka was asked as to why as king he did not find it necessary to go and enquire. Janaka replied that the fire department would take care of the fire and that he was not bothered. He was more interested in the lecture on Vedanta. For Self-Knowledge Bhagavad Gita emphasizes "जन्ममृत्यु-जराव्याधि-दुःखदोषानुदर्शनम्" - continuous perception of misery in birth, death, old age and disease.

Truthfulness

Upanishad says: "सत्यंवद" - Speak the truth. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma says to Yudhishthira: "There is no duty higher than truth and no sin more dreadful than untruth. Indeed truth is the very root of righteousness. Therefore we should never tamper with truth. On one occasion the merits of

truth and a thousand horse-sacrifices were weighed against each other in the balance. Truth proved the heavier of the two." Truth also means what is right in conduct, what is just in social relations and what is true in knowledge. Bhagavan is Truth. While speaking the truth, we have to guard against uttering disagreeable truth. Manu says: "One should always speak truth, but agreeable and wholesome. One should never speak truth that hurts or harms others. One should never speak untruth even if agreeable. This is eternal Dharma." Tiruvalluvar says: "Lights that dispel external darkness are no lights. For the wise, truth, which dispels the inner darkness (ignorance), is alone light." The colossal sacrifices made by Harischandra, Yudhishthira, Dasaratha et al in keeping the promises they made show the high place of truth in the moral order. Devi Bhagavatham recounts the story of an illiterate brahmana, Satyavrata, who, living in a forest, rigidly adhered to speaking the truth in all circumstances. In due course he came to be regarded as a sage. Once a pig, wounded by the arrows of a hunter, came into his Ashram. The hunter, who followed, enquired with the sage about the whereabouts of the pig. He entreated the sage to tell the truth as his family was suffering from pangs of hunger. The unlettered brahmana was in a moral dilemma –to stick to his unbroken vow of speaking the truth or to save the pig. At this time a miracle happened. Satyavrata was blessed all of a sudden by Devi with scholarship, poetry and wisdom. He burst out: "यापश्यतिनसाब्रूतेयाब्रूतेसानपश्यति" - "The one that sees (eye) does not speak; the one that speaks (mouth) does not see." Satyavrata thought it was his higher dharma to save a life rather than stick to dry truth. Satyavrata's statement has deep spiritual significance - experience of the Supreme is beyond words. One who has seen Bhagavan by himself, i.e. experienced Bhagavan cannot describe his experience in words. One who describes it in words has not experienced Bhagavan.

Freedom from anger

Bhagavad Gita, tracing the genesis of anger, says that it is unfulfilled desire that causes anger. A desire, once fulfilled, yields place to the next desire in an unending chain. Desires never vanish. Hence most times desires are bound to remain unsatisfied. The stage is thus set for anger to walk in. As a consequence we will remain angry most of the time. Counting God's numberless mercies enjoyed by us and constant prayer to Him to bless us with peace of mind are the only positive ways of getting rid of anger. Tiruvalluvar says: For protecting oneself one has to keep anger away; if not, anger will destroy him. Bhartruhari says in his Nitisatakam:

"नकश्चिच्-चण्डकोपानां-आत्मीयोनामभूभुजाम्।

होतारंजुह्वतमपिस्पृष्टोदहतिपावकः॥"

"There is no real friend for kings consumed by anger. Fire, when touched, burns even the one who offers oblations". Once Buddha was moving from

house to house for alms. One householder not only refused alms, but also spoke angrily to Buddha. Buddha responded: “If a householder gives alms to a beggar, who refuses to accept the food, to whom does the food belong?” The householder replied: “Of course it belongs to the householder only.” Buddha said: “If I refuse to accept the harsh words of abuse you hurled at me, then they will come back to you!” Sant Eknath demonstrated in his life the great quality of absence of anger. Once when he was returning from bath in the river, a man deputed by a person jealous of him, spat on him. Eknath did not react. He went back to the river and took bath again. The man on the riverbank spat again. The Sant went back to the river for bath. This was repeated a hundred times. The offending man could not believe that Eknath could be so patient. He fell at the feet of the Sant and sought forgiveness. Eknath responded: “If you had not spat, I would have taken bath in this holy river only once. Now since you spat repeatedly a hundred times, I got the rare opportunity of bathing a hundred times in the river. I am indeed thankful to you.”

Let us digest and try to adopt the above ten great virtues enumerated by Manu in our life. May Bhagavan’s blessings be with us.

॥ ऒं तत् सत् ब्रह्मार्पणमस्तु ॥

Panchadasi of Sri Vidyaranya Swami

A Summary [Chapter by Chapter]
By S. N. Sastri

Introduction

Sri Vidyaranya Swami flourished in the fourteenth century A.D. He was the Guru as well as the Prime Minister of Harihara I and Bukka, the founders of the Vijayanagara Kingdom. He is reputed to the greatest among post-Sankara Advaitins. He was the head of the Sringeri Sarada Pitha established by Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada from 1377 to 1386 A.D. Panchadasi is one of the works attributed to him. This work is so named because it consists of fifteen chapters. It is a comprehensive manual of Advaita Vedanta. The fundamental teachings of Advaita are presented in this work in a clear and lucid manner. It is therefore the best text for the novice who desires to get acquainted with this philosophy. At the same time the work is very profound and is of interest to advanced students of Advaita as well.

The fifteen chapters of this work are divided into three groups of five chapters each. Brahman or the supreme Self, which is the only reality according to Advaita, is described in the Upanishads as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The first group of five chapters deals with the Existence aspect of Brahman, the second group with the Consciousness aspect and the third with the Bliss aspect.

The core of Advaita is that Brahman is the only reality. 'Reality' is defined as that which does not undergo any change at any time. By this test, Brahman, which is absolutely changeless and eternal, is alone real. The world keeps on changing all the time and so it cannot be considered as real. At the same time, we cannot dismiss it as unreal, because it is actually experienced by us. The example of a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light is used to explain this. The snake so seen produces the same reaction, such as fear and trembling of the limbs, as a real snake would. It cannot therefore be said to be totally unreal. At the same time, on examination with the help of a lamp it is found that the snake never existed and that the rope alone was there all the time. The snake cannot be described as both real and unreal, because these two contradictory qualities cannot exist in the same substance. It must therefore be said that the snake is neither real nor unreal. Such an object is described as 'mithya'. Just as the snake appears because of ignorance of the fact that there is only a rope, this world appears to exist because of our ignorance of Brahman. Thus the world is also neither real nor unreal; it is also 'mithya'. Just as the snake is superimposed on the rope, the world is superimposed on Brahman. Our ignorance of Brahman is what is called

Avidya or Ajnana or Nescience. This ignorance not only covers Brahman, but it projects the world as a reality. The world has no reality apart from Brahman, just as the snake has no reality apart from the rope. When the knowledge of Brahman arises, the world is seen as a mere appearance of Brahman. Another example may be taken to explain this. Ornaments of different sizes and shapes are made out of one gold bar. Their appearance and the use for which they are meant vary, but the fact that they are all really only gold, in spite of the different appearances and uses, cannot be denied. The appearance may change, a bangle may be converted into rings, but the gold always remains as gold. Similarly, on the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman (which is the same as the Self), though the different forms of human beings, animals, etc., continue to be seen by the Jnani, he sees them all only as appearances of the one Brahman. Thus the perception of difference and the consequences of such perception, such as looking upon some as favourable and others as the opposite, and the consequent efforts to retain or get what is favourable and to get rid of or avoid what is not favourable, come to an end. This is the state of liberation even while living, which is known as Jivanmukti.

The Jiva, or individual, is Brahman itself, but because of identification with the body, mind and senses he looks upon himself as different from Brahman and as a limited being, subject to joys and sorrows caused by external factors. This identification with the body, mind and senses is what is called bondage. In reality the Jiva is the pure Brahman and is different from the body-mind complex. When this truth is realized as an actual experience, the identification with the body-mind complex ceases. This is liberation. Thus liberation is not the attainment of a state which did not exist previously, but only the realization of what one has always been. The illusory snake never existed. What existed even when the snake was seen was only the rope. Similarly, bondage has no real existence at all. Even when we are ignorant of Brahman and think of ourselves as limited by the body, we are really none but the infinite Brahman. Liberation is thus only the removal of the wrong identification with the body, mind and senses. The attainment of the state of liberation-in-life or Jivanmukti is the goal of human life according to the Upanishads.

Maya, which is also known by other names such as Prakriti, Avidya and Nescience, is what conceals Brahman and projects the universe. It is because of this that everyone identifies himself with his body-mind complex and is ignorant of the truth that he is none other than Brahman. Sri Vidyaranya points out that Maya may be looked upon from three different standpoints. For the ordinary worldly individual who looks upon the world as real, Maya which is the cause of the appearance of the world is real. For the enlightened person who has realized his identity with Brahman, Maya does not exist at all. For the person who attempts to understand Maya through

reasoning, Maya is indeterminable because it cannot be described as either real or unreal or both.

There is a wrong notion that according to Advaita the world is a mere illusion. What Advaita says is that the world is not real in the sense in which Brahman is real. Advaita accepts three orders of reality. Brahman, which is eternal and changeless, is the absolute reality, known in Vedanta as paaramaarthika satyam. The world has empirical reality, known as vyaavahaarika satyam, which means that as long as a person has not become free from avidya and has not realized his real nature as Brahman, the world is real for him. It is on this basis that all the rituals, injunctions and prohibitions laid down in the Vedas become applicable to such a person. In other words, until a person realizes that he is not the body or mind or senses but Brahman, the world is real for him. The object of Vedanta is to make man give up his wrong identification with the body and realize his true nature. What is meant here is not mere intellectual knowledge, but actual experience, which is otherwise known as realization.

The third order of reality consists of such cases as a rope appearing as a snake, a piece of nacre being mistaken for silver, and the experiences in dream. This order of reality is known as praatibhaasika satyam.

Panchadasi is a metrical work in Sanskrit. In the following chapters a summary of this work, chapter by chapter, is given. It is hoped that this will serve as an introduction to the work and will motivate the reader to go on to a detailed study, verse by verse.

Chapter - 1
Tattvaviveka - The discriminative knowledge of the ultimate Reality

In the first verse of the first chapter Sri Vidyaranya salutes his Guru, Sri Sankarananda, who "dedicated his life to the task of destruction of the monster of primal ignorance together with its manifestation, the phenomenal universe". This verse serves also as a prayer to the Supreme Being for the successful completion of the work, since the name 'Sankarananda' also means the Supreme Brahman who is Bliss itself.

In the second verse the author says that the discriminative knowledge of the ultimate Reality (Tattva) is being presented in this work for the easy understanding of those whose minds have been purified by service to the lotus feet of their Guru.

These two verses also bring out, by implication, the four topics that are required by tradition to be indicated at the commencement of any work

(sambandha-chatushtaya), namely, the vishaya or subject-matter of the work, the prayojana or purpose of the work, the adhikari or person for whom it is intended, and the sambandha or the connection of this work with Vedanta. 'Sankara' means Paramatma, and 'ananda' stands for the jivatma or individual soul. So the term Sankarananda indicates the identity of the jivatma and Paramatma, which is the subject-matter of this work. The purpose of this work is the destruction of primal ignorance, which leads to the attainment of the supreme bliss of liberation. The person who has attained purity of mind is the adhikari or the person for whom this work is intended. The sambandha is the fact that this work elucidates the teachings of the Upanishads for the easy understanding of the adhikari.

The actual subject-matter of the work starts from verse 3. We experience innumerable objects in this world through our sense-organs in the waking state. The objects are different from one another, but the consciousness behind the senses, which is different from the objects experienced, is only one. The consciousness of A is not different from that of B or C. Since consciousness by itself has no distinguishing features, it cannot vary from person to person.

The same is the case with the dream state. The objects experienced in dream are transient and disappear when the dreamer wakes up, but the objects experienced in the waking state are relatively permanent. But the consciousness in both the states is the same.

When a person wakes up from deep sleep he remembers that he slept happily and did not know anything during his sleep. Remembrance is possible only of objects experienced earlier. It is therefore clear that in deep sleep absence of knowledge and happiness are experienced.

The same consciousness is present in all the three states, as is proved by the fact that a person identifies himself as the same in all the states. This consciousness is thus the same in all persons and at all times. It is therefore only one and is eternal, without any beginning or end. It is self-revealing and does not need another consciousness to reveal itself or its objects.

This consciousness alone remains unchanged in all the three states. The sense-organs are not present in the dream state and the mind itself is not experienced in deep sleep. Therefore this consciousness is the unchanging essence of every living being and it is therefore called the self. This self, or essence of all living beings, is of the nature of supreme bliss, for it is the object of unconditional love. All other objects and persons are loved only if they are conducive to one's own happiness. Even one's own body may be disliked when it causes suffering. But the self is never disliked; on the other hand it alone is the perennial object of love. Sometimes a person may say

that he hates himself and wants to put an end to his life, but that is because he identifies himself with his body which is the cause of suffering due to disease, poverty or other reasons. From the fact that the Self is the object of the highest love it follows that it is of the nature of the highest bliss, since what every human being wants always is happiness. All other things, such as money, house, children and the like are desired only because they are expected to make the person happier; but happiness is desired for its own sake.

It has thus been established by reasoning that the individual self is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. The Upanishads declare that the supreme Brahman is also of the same nature and that the individual self and Supreme Brahman are the same.

If an object exists at a particular place but is not actually seen, it must be due to some obstruction such as darkness or a wall in between. Similarly there must be some obstruction because of which the self, though existing, is not revealed to us. This obstruction is avidya. This avidya is beginningless in the sense that we cannot know how and when it originated, because it is logically prior to time.

Prakriti is composed of the three gunas, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas and has in it the reflection of Brahman which is pure consciousness and bliss. This Prakriti is of two kinds. When the element of sattva is pure, it is known as Maya; when impure, due to the admixture of rajas and tamas, it is called avidya. Brahman reflected in Maya is the omniscient Isvara, who controls Maya. Brahman reflected in avidya (impure Prakriti) is the jiva who is under the control of Maya. Jivas are innumerable in number and are of different grades due to the different degrees of admixture of rajas and tamas. Avidya is the causal body or kaaranasarira of the jiva. The word 'sarira' means, by derivation, 'what is perishable'. Avidya is called sarira or body because it will cease to exist on the dawn of self-realization. It is called 'kaarana' or causal because it is the cause of the subtle and gross bodies. When the jiva identifies himself with the causal body he is called praajna. This happens in the state of deep sleep when the senses as well as the mind cease to function and there is only avidya.

At the command of Isvara the five subtle elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water and earth, arose from the part of Prakriti in which tamas predominates, in order that every jiva may have experiences in accordance with its karma. The five subtle organs of sense, namely, those of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, respectively arose from the sattva part of the five subtle elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth. From a combination of the sattva parts of all the five subtle elements arose the antahkarana or the mind. Though only one, the mind is given different names according to the different functions

performed by it. When the mind cogitates it is known as the manas or mind. When it comes to a decision it is called buddhi or intellect. The function of storing information and experiences is called cittam. The notion of 'I-ness' which is behind all these functions is called ahankara or ego.

From the rajas part of the subtle elements arose the subtle organs of action - the organ of speech arose from the rajas part of ether, the hands from the rajas part of air, the feet from the rajas part of fire, the organ of excretion from the rajas part of water and the genital organ from the rajas part of earth. (Note: These, it should be noted, are not the physical organs bearing those names, but their subtle counterparts in the subtle body. The presiding deities of these organs are, in order, Agni, Indra, Vishnu, Yama and Prajapati.)

From a combination of the rajas parts of all the five subtle elements arose prana or the vital air. This prana is given five different names according to the five different functions performed by it- prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana.

[Note: These functions are described in Sri Sankara's Bhashya on Prasnopanishad 3.5, thus: He (prana) places apana, a division of himself, in the two lower apertures, as engaged in the work of ejecting the excreta. Prana himself, who occupies the position of the sovereign, resides in the eyes and the ears and issues out through the mouth and nostrils. In the navel is samana, which is so called because it assimilates all that is eaten or drunk, distributes them equally in all parts of the body and effects digestion. Udana, another division of prana, moves throughout the body and functions upwards. It leads the soul out of the body at the time of death and takes it to other worlds according to one's punya and papa. Vyana regulates prana and apana and is the cause of actions requiring strength. According to Sankhya, there are five more subsidiary vital forces known as naaga, koorma, krikara, devadatta and dhananjaya). Their functions are, respectively, causing vomiting, winking, creating hunger, producing yawning and nourishing the body).

The five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the five vital airs (prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana), mind and intellect - all these seventeen together constitute the subtle body, which is known as sukshma sarira or linga sarira. (Though the cittam and ahankara, which are also names of the antahkarana as stated earlier, are not specifically mentioned here, they should also be taken as included in mind and intellect).

When the jiva identifies himself with the subtle body, he is known as Taijasa. This happens in the state of dream. Isvara identified with the totality of subtle bodies is known as Hiranyagarbha. The difference between the two is the same as the difference between the individual and the collective.

Hiranyagarbha is called 'samashti' or 'totality' because of his identification with all the subtle bodies of the universe. Taijasa identifies himself only with his own subtle body and so he is called 'vyashti' or 'individual'.

After the five subtle elements came into existence, a process of combination of the elements took place. This process is known as 'quintuplication' or 'pañcikaranam'. What happened was that each subtle element was first divided into two equal halves. One of the halves of each element was then divided into four equal parts, resulting in four one-eighth parts of each element. The other half of each element then combined with one-eighth part of each of the other elements. Thus, one half of the element 'earth' combined with one-eighth of each of the other four elements, to become the gross element 'earth'. The same thing happened with the other elements. As a result, each gross element has half of itself and one-eighth of each of the other four elements. All the gross objects of experience in the universe and all the gross bodies of all living creatures were created out of these five gross elements.

It has been said above that Isvara identified with all the subtle bodies is called Hiranyagarbha. The same Isvara identified with the totality of gross bodies is known as Vaisvanara. When the jiva identifies himself with his own gross body he is known as Visva.

The jivas go helplessly from one birth to another, just as worms that have fallen into a river are swept from one whirlpool into another. As a result of good deeds performed in many births, a particular jiva may be fortunate to receive initiation from a Guru who has himself realised Brahman. Then he differentiates the self from the five sheaths which make up his gross and subtle bodies and attains the supreme bliss of liberation. The five sheaths are those of food, vital air, mind, intellect and bliss, known respectively in Vedanta as annamayakosa, pranamayakosa, manomayakosa, vijnanamayakosa and anandamayakosa. The jiva, being enveloped in these five sheaths, identifies himself with them and forgets his real nature. This is the cause of repeated births and deaths, known as transmigration.

The five sheaths

The gross (or physical) body, which is the product of the gross elements, i.e., the elements after quintuplication, is known as the food sheath or annamayakosa. The five vital airs and the five organs of action, which are the products of the rajas aspect of Prakriti, together constitute the vital sheath or pranamayakosa. The cogitating mind (manas) and the five organs of perception, which are the product of the sattva aspect of Prakriti make up the mind sheath or manomayakosa. The buddhi or deciding intellect, together with the five organs of perception, forms the intellect sheath or

vijnanamayakosa. The causal body (avidya or kaaranasarira) is the bliss sheath or anandamayakosa.

The self, which is identical with the supreme Brahman, should be realised by distinguishing it from the five sheaths in the following manner. The physical body, which is present in the waking state, is not experienced in the dream state, since the organs of sense and of action do not function then. In the state of deep sleep neither the physical body nor the subtle body is experienced, since the mind is also dormant then. The witnessing self, which is pure consciousness, is however, present in all the three states. Though the causal body, (avidya or nescience) is present in the state of deep sleep, it is negated in the state of deep meditation, but the self is present in that state also. Thus all the five sheaths are seen to be impermanent and only the self is permanent. The self can thus be distinguished from the five sheaths (or the three bodies) through reasoning, just as the slender, internal pith of the munja grass is detached from its coarse external covering. The identity of the individual self and Brahman is taught in sentences such as 'That thou art' in the Upanishads.

Brahman associated with the tamasic aspect of Maya is the material cause (upadana-kaaranam) of the universe. Brahman associated with the sattvic aspect of Maya is the efficient cause (nimitta-kaaranam) of the universe. Brahman associated with (or reflected in) Maya, is Isvara and he is thus the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. It is Isvara that is primarily denoted by the word 'That' in the sentence (mahavakya) 'That thou art'. Brahman reflected in avidya is the jiva. The primary meaning of the term 'thou' in the above sentence is the 'jiva'. The difference between Maya and avidya has already been pointed out earlier.

In the sentence 'This is that Devadatta', the word 'that' refers to a person named Devadatta associated with a former time and place, whereas the word 'this' refers to the person seen at the present time and place. The sentence brings out the identity of the person seen at the two different times and places by ignoring the particular connotations of 'this' and 'that'. Similarly, the sentence 'That thou art' brings out the identity of Brahman and the jiva by negating Maya and avidya, which are both 'mithya' (i.e, which cannot be characterised as either real or unreal). The truth of both jiva and Isvara is thus the indivisible supreme Brahman, who is pure existence, consciousness and bliss.

This is further elaborated below, based on the Commentary of Sri Jagadguru Chandrasekhara Bharati on verses 243 to 251 - of Vivekachudamani of Sri Sankara. The word tat stands for Brahman as qualified by the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution (i.e. Isvara). The word tvam stands for the Atma as qualified by the mental states of waking, dream and deep sleep

(i.e. jiva). These two are of mutually opposed qualities, like the glow-worm and the sun, like the servant and the king, like the well and the ocean and like the atom and the earth (verse 244). There can be no identity between these two, which are the literal meanings (vacyartha) of the words tat and tvam. The identity is only between their implied meanings (lakshyartha). The opposition between the literal meanings is due to the upadhi, since the literal meaning of tat is Brahman with the upadhi or limiting adjunct of Maya and the literal meaning of tvam is Atma with the limiting adjunct of the five sheaths. When these limiting adjuncts, which are not real from the absolute standpoint, are negated, there is neither Isvara nor jiva. The two terms tat and tvam (That and Thou) are to be understood properly by their implied meanings in order to grasp the import of the absolute identity between them. This is to be done neither by total rejection of their literal meaning nor by total non-rejection, but by a combination of both.

Implied meanings are of three kinds: jahal-lakshana, ajahal-lakshana and jahadajahal-lakshana.

Jahal-lakshana - The literal meaning is to be rejected and some other meaning consistent with it is to be adopted. An example is - Gangayam ghoshah, the literal meaning of which is - 'a hamlet on the river Ganga'. Since there cannot be a hamlet on the river itself, it is the bank of the river that is meant. Here the literal meaning of the word 'Ganga' has to be given up completely and the implied meaning 'bank' has to be adopted.

Ajahal-lakshana - Without giving up the literal meaning of the word, what is implied by it is also adopted to get the meaning intended to be conveyed. An example is - the sentence, 'The red is running', which is intended to convey that the red horse is running. Here the literal meaning of the word 'red' is retained and the implied word "horse" is added to get the correct sense of the sentence.

Jahadajahal-lakshana - Here a part of the literal meaning is retained and the other part discarded. The sentence 'This is that Devadatta' is interpreted by using this lakshana. The meaning intended to be conveyed by this sentence is that Devadatta who is seen at the present time in the present place is the same as the person who was seen earlier in another place. The literal meaning of the word 'this' is Devadatta associated with the present time and place. The literal meaning of the word 'that' is Devadatta associated with the past time and some other place. Since this sentence purports to convey the identity of the person seen in different places at different times, we get this meaning by discarding the reference to the place and time conveyed by the words 'this' and 'that' and retaining the reference to Devadatta. This is also known as bhagatyaga-lakshana. The meaning of the sentence tat tvam asi is obtained by using this method. Just as in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta'

the identity is stated by rejecting the contradictory qualities, so also in the sentence 'That thou art' the contradictory qualities (namely, the limiting adjuncts) are rejected. Thus it follows that the jiva and Brahman are in essence one when the limiting adjuncts, Maya and the five sheaths, are rejected}.

The realization of the identity of the individual self (jivatma) and Brahman (paramatma) is liberation. This is not some state to be attained after death in some other world, but it is what is to be realised during one's lifetime itself. This is known as liberation-in-life or jivanmukti. The means for this realization are three - hearing (sravana), reflection (manana) and unbroken meditation (nididhyasana). 'Hearing' is not merely listening to the teacher who expounds the upanishads, but arriving at the conviction that the purport of all the upanishads is the identity of the individual self and Brahman. 'Reflection' is churning in the mind what has been heard from the teacher, by making use of arguments in a constructive manner, to arrive at the conviction of its correctness. 'Meditation' is keeping the mind fixed on the thought of Brahman, uninterrupted by any other thought.

The result achieved by 'hearing,' etc.

'Hearing' removes the doubt whether the upanishadic text which is the pramana (source of knowledge) expounds Brahman or something else. This doubt is known as pramana asambhavana, or the doubt about the pramana itself.

'Reflection' removes the doubt whether Brahman and the jiva are the same or not. This doubt is called prameya asambhavana.

'Meditation' is intended to remove wrong notions such as 'The universe is real; the difference between Brahman and jiva is real', which are contrary to the teachings of the upanishads, by developing concentration of the mind. Such wrong notions are known as viparitabhavana.

Thus the purpose of hearing, reflection and meditation is the removal of obstacles in the form of doubts and wrong notions that stand in the way of Self-realization.

When the mind gradually leaves off the ideas of the meditator and the act of meditation and gets merged in the Self which is the object of meditation, it is called the state of samadhi. In this state the mind is steady like the flame of a lamp kept in a place where there is no breeze at all. This has been mentioned in Bhagavadgita, ch. 6, verse 19. Though in this state there is no subjective cognition of the mental function having the Self as object, its continued existence in this state is inferred from the recollection after emergence from

samadhi. This shows that only the modifications of the mind cease in samadhi, but the mind itself is not dissolved. By such a samadhi, known as nirvikalpa samadhi, all the accumulated karma and all desires, which are the seeds of transmigratory existence, are destroyed. Then the mahavakya 'That thou art' gives rise to the direct realization of Brahman. The indirect knowledge of Brahman, received from the Guru, burns up all sins committed upto the attainment of that knowledge. The direct realization of Brahman totally destroys nescience which is the root cause of the cycle of repeated births and deaths.

Thus the Self should be distinguished from the five sheaths and the mind should be concentrated on the Self in order to attain liberation from bondage.

Chapter - 2
Mahabhutaviveka - The discriminative knowledge of the five elements

Brahman, the non-dual reality, can be known by discriminating it from the five elements. To enable this, the five elements are first described.

The element ether has only one quality, sound. The element air has sound and touch as its qualities. The element fire has sound, touch and colour. The element water has sound, touch, colour and taste. The element earth has sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. These elements are perceived by the corresponding five organs of perception.

All actions of man can be classified into five groups. These are speech, grasping, movement, excretion and reproduction. These are performed through the corresponding five organs of action, namely, tongue, hands, feet, anus and genitals.

The subtle organs of perception and action are known as 'indriyas'. These form part of the subtle body. The corresponding organs in the physical or gross body are known as 'golaka'. The mind is the ruler of the ten organs of perception and action. It is situated within the heart-lotus. It is known as the inner organ (antahkarana). It depends on the ten organs for its functions in relation to external objects. The mind is constituted of the three gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas. The mind undergoes changes which are caused by the gunas. Sattva guna produces non-attachment, forgiveness, generosity and similar virtues in the mind. Rajas gives rise to emotions such as desire, anger, avarice and is the cause of the person undertaking various actions. Tamas is responsible for lethargy, confusion, drowsiness, etc. When sattva is predominant in the mind, merit (punya) is acquired; when rajas predominates, demerit (papa) results. When tamas is predominant, life is merely wasted.

All the objects in the world, as well as the senses and the mind are made up of the five elements.

There are three kinds of differences. A tree has the trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. These are all different from one another. These are differences within one object, namely, the tree. Such a difference is known as 'svagatabheda' or internal difference. The difference of one tree from another is known as 'sajatiyabheda' or difference within the same species. The difference of a tree from a stone (or from any object other than a tree) is called 'vijatiyabheda' or difference between objects of different species. Since Brahman is the only reality, and there is nothing else of the same species or of a different species, there can be no difference of the last two kinds in Brahman. Since Brahman is homogeneous and without parts, there can be no internal difference. Brahman is therefore described as 'one only, without a second'. The word 'one' negates 'sajatiyabheda'; the word 'only' rejects 'svagatabheda'; and the words 'without a second' negate 'vijatiyabheda'. Brahman can be experienced when the mind becomes absolutely tranquil. Brahman is self-revealing and is the witness of the cessation of all modifications of the mind. Maya is the power of Brahman and has no existence independent of Brahman. Maya cannot be known directly, but can only be inferred from its effect, the universe. Before the manifestation of the universe Maya existed in Brahman in a potential form. Maya is neither existence nor non-existence. It is indefinable.

The Sruti says that the created universe forms only a part of Brahman. In the Gita Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "The universe is sustained by a part of Me". Though Brahman is without parts, the Sruti speaks of it as having parts, using the language familiar to us. With Brahman as the substratum, Maya modifies itself into all the objects in the world, just like various pictures drawn on a wall. The first modification of Maya is space. Space derives its existence from Brahman. That is to say, space appears to exist only because of its substratum, Brahman, which is existence itself. Space has sound as its quality. It is Brahman or Existence which appears as akasa (space), but ordinary people and the logicians consider existence as a property of akasa. This wrong notion is due to Maya. Space has no existence apart from Brahman. Similarly, the other elements, air, fire, water and earth too have no existence apart from Brahman. They are not real in the absolute sense, but appear to be real because of the substratum, Brahman. Brahman is all-pervading, but the range of Maya is limited, that of space is more limited and that of air yet more so.

Space has the property of (communicating) sound. Air has the property of perceptibility to the sense of touch. Colour is the specific property of fire, in addition to the properties of space and air. The specific property of water is taste. In addition it has the properties of its predecessors, space, air and fire.

Earth has the specific property of smell, in addition to the properties of space, air, fire and water.

Brahman alone is the absolute Reality. The universe has only empirical reality. When duality, which is not real, is negated, one becomes established in the non-dual Brahman. Such a person is known as a jivanmukta (liberated-in-life).

A jivanmukta is not affected by delusion and it makes no difference whether he dies healthy or in illness, whether while in meditation or rolling on the ground, whether in a conscious state or in an unconscious state, since he has already given up identification with the body.
Thus the discrimination of the elements from the non-dual Reality leads to supreme bliss.

Chapter - 3
Panchakosaviveka - The discrimination of the five sheaths

The Taittiriya upanishad describes Brahman or the Self as "hidden in the cave". The 'cave' is the five sheaths known as annamayakosa (physical sheath), pranamayakosa (the sheath of the vital airs), manomayakosa (the mental sheath), vijnanamayakosa (the sheath of the intellect) and anandamayakosa (the sheath of bliss). The outermost is the physical sheath or the gross physical body or sthula sarira. Within it are the vital, mental and intellect sheaths, in that order. These three sheaths together constitute the subtle body or the sukshma sarira. The innermost sheath is the sheath of bliss. This is the causal body or karana sarira.

The physical body is produced from the seed and blood of the parents, which are formed out of the food eaten by them. It grows by food. It does not exist either before birth or after death. It comes into existence as the result of past actions. It cannot therefore be the Self which is eternal and has neither birth nor death. The vital sheath consists of the five pranas, namely, prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana. These pervade the physical body and give the power to the sense organs to function. This sheath cannot be the Self, since it is devoid of consciousness. The mental sheath is what gives rise to the notions of 'I' and 'mine' with regard to the body, relations and possessions. It too cannot be the Self because it has desires, is subject to delusion and is always changing. The intellect, on which there is the reflection of pure Consciousness, and which is dormant in the state of deep sleep is the intellect sheath. It cannot be the Self because it undergoes changes.

The inner organ, though one, is treated as two, namely, the intellect or buddhi and the mind or manas. The mind collects information through the sense-

organs and presents it to the intellect which judges and decides. In deep sleep the inner organ becomes dormant and bliss is experienced. This is the bliss sheath. This too cannot be the Self because it is impermanent. The source of this bliss is the Self. The Self is always the subject and can never be the object of experience. The Self is consciousness itself and imparts consciousness to the mind and body, just as sugar is sweetness itself and imparts sweetens to all dishes which taste sweet. The Self cannot be described because it is not an object. It is self-revealing. This Self is Brahman. Being all-pervasive, Brahman is not limited by space. Being eternal, it is not limited by time. Being the substratum of the whole universe, it is not limited by any object, just as the rope is not limited by the illusory snake. Thus Brahman is infinite in all three respects.

Brahman, who is Existence, Consciousness and Infinite is the only Reality. Isvara and jiva are mere superimpositions on Brahman by Maya and avidya respectively. Maya is the power of Isvara, which controls the whole universe, but is itself under the control of Isvara. It appears to have consciousness because of the reflection of Brahman in it. Brahman is pure Consciousness, while Isvara is omniscient because of His power, Maya. Brahman is called jiva when It is looked upon as associated with the five sheaths, just as a man is called a father and a grandfather in relation to his son and grandson. When considered apart from Maya and the five sheaths Brahman is neither Isvara nor jiva. He who realises that he is in essence Brahman (and not the body-mind complex) is not born again, since Brahman has no birth and is eternal.

Chapter - 4
Dvaitaviveka - Discrimination of Duality

In this chapter the duality created by Isvara and that created by the Jiva are described and differentiated. This will show what is the cause of bondage and what has to be rejected by the aspirant for liberation.

The Svetasvatara Upanishad says (4.10): "Know Maya to be Prakriti and Brahman associated with Maya as Isvara". Isvara is the creator of the universe. The Aitareya Upanishad says that before creation there was Atman (i.e. Brahman) alone. He willed, "Let me create", and He created the world by His will. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that from the Self or Brahman arose in succession ether, air, fire, water, earth, vegetation, food and bodies. Isvara willed, "Let me become many, let me create", and meditated and thus created the universe. The Chandogya Upanishad says that before creation Brahman alone existed as pure Existence. He desired to become many and created fire, water, earth and all living beings such as those born of eggs, those born from wombs, etc. The Mundaka Upanishad says that from the immutable Brahman arose the various sentient beings and insentient objects, in the

same way as sparks emanate from a blazing fire. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that before it became manifest the universe existed in an unmanifest state. It assumed names and forms and manifested as Virat. From Virat came into being the Manus, human beings, cattle, asses, horses, goats, etc, of both sexes, down to ants. According to these Srutis Isvara entered into all these bodies as the Jiva. The Jiva is so called because it bears Prana, or the vital air. The Jiva is a blend of the substratum or Pure Consciousness, the subtle body and the reflection of Pure Consciousness in the subtle body. Maya, which is the Power of Isvara, has, in addition to the power to create, also the power to delude. The latter deludes the Jiva. The Jiva, thus deluded, identifies himself with the body, considers himself to be a limited, helpless being and thus becomes subject to grief. What has been described so far is the duality created by Isvara.

The duality created by the Jiva is described in the section known as Sapta-anna Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Jiva creates seven kinds of food (or objects of experience) by his actions and meditations. Of these seven, one kind is meant for human beings in general, two for the gods, one for animals and the remaining three for himself. Grains such as wheat are for human beings. The ingredients of the full-moon and new-moon sacrifices are for the gods. Milk is for animals. The mind, speech and vital airs (Prana) are for the Jiva himself. These are the seven kinds of food created by the Jiva. Though these objects are also created by Isvara, the Jiva converts them into objects of enjoyment for himself and so they are spoken of here as the creations of the Jiva. The idea is that each Jiva creates his own world by his actions and thoughts in previous births and so whatever objects he experiences and whatever joys he enjoys and sorrows he suffers, are all the result of his own actions and thoughts.

An object such as a gem, which is a creation of Isvara, always remains the same, but the attitude of each individual human being towards it differs. The man who gets possession of it feels happy, while another man who has not got it is sad. A third man, who is indifferent to such objects, feels neither happy nor sad. The feelings of happiness, sorrow and indifference are created by the respective Jivas towards the gem, but the nature of the gem as created by God does not undergo any change. Similarly the attitudes of different persons towards the same woman differ, depending on whether he is her father or brother or husband or a stranger. Correspondingly the attitude of the same woman towards each of these different persons will be different, depending on her relationship with them. Thus, while the physical body of the woman as well the other men remains the same, the mind of each of them undergoes changes in accordance with their relationships. These changes are created by the Jivas. Thus each human being or Jiva has two aspects, the material and the mental. It is this mental aspect, which is the creation of each Jiva, that is the cause of bondage. Each Jiva develops likes and dislikes

towards various objects. depending on his mental attitude which is governed by the impressions (called Vasanas) left by his own past actions. These likes and dislikes are the cause of joy and sorrow. In dream a person experiences joys and sorrows because of objects conjured up by the mind, though there are no external objects. In deep sleep, when the mind does not function, no joy or sorrow is felt by the person, even if there are objects by his side which can cause joy, sorrow, fear, anger, etc. Thus it is clear that it is the mind that is the cause of joys and sorrows; not other persons or objects.

A person whose son had gone to a far-off country was wrongly informed by someone that the son had died. Though this information was wrong, the father was plunged in sorrow. At the same time, his neighbour, whose son it was who had died in a foreign country, remained calm, believing that his son was safe. This shows that the real cause of a man's bondage and sorrow is the mind and not any actual event.

Unlike the Buddhist Vijnanavadins, Advaita accepts the existence of external objects and holds that, in perception, the mind takes the form of the external object. It may be argued that, since it is the mind that causes bondage by projecting the phenomenal world, the world could be made to disappear by controlling the mind through the practice of yoga. The answer to this is that though duality can be made to disappear temporarily by control of the mind, final elimination of bondage is not possible without the realization of Brahman, which alone will destroy Nescience (avidya).

Even after the realization of Brahman, the duality created by Isvara will continue to be perceived by the Jnani, but he will not be affected by it, since he has realized their unreality. Once a person has been convinced that the water that appears in a mirage is illusory, he will no longer go after it, though the water will continue to appear as before when looked at from a distance. The mere disappearance of duality cannot eliminate bondage without realization of Brahman. At the time of the dissolution of the universe all objects cease to exist, but they will come into manifestation again when the next cycle of creation starts. At that time all Jivas who have not realized Brahman in the previous cycle of creation will be born again. Thus total freedom from rebirth can be attained only by the realization of Brahman.

The world of objects created by God is a help for the realization of non-duality and not an obstacle. It does not get destroyed even when a person attains knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. It is the duality created by the Jiva that hinders the attainment of Self-knowledge. The duality created by the Jiva is of two kinds- that which is in conformity with the scriptural teachings and that which is not. The first should be accepted and practised till Self-knowledge is attained. Enquiry about Brahman by hearing the scriptures from a Guru, reflecting on its teachings and meditating on them is the duality which is in

conformity with the scriptures. This enquiry necessarily involves the acceptance of different entities such as Guru, disciple and the Sastras, but this duality is necessary to enable the disciple to conduct the enquiry into Brahman and so it is acceptable. But even this difference (or duality) has to be given up after the realization of Brahman, because then there is nothing other than Brahman. The Amritananda Upanishad says: "A wise person, having studied the scriptures and repeatedly practised their teachings, should renounce them after realizing Brahman, just as a traveller throws away a flaming torch after reaching his destination, or as a person throws away the husk after taking the grain". He should thereafter keep his mind fixed on Brahman and should not burden his mind with mere words (Br. Up. 4.4.21).

The duality (or multiplicity) that is not in conformity with the scriptures is that resulting from looking upon all living beings and objects as different from one another. It is this mental attitude that gives rise to attachment, aversion, anger, greed and other emotions. The mental attitude that gives rise to craving, anger and similar emotions is called 'violent'. That which gives rise to fanciful thoughts is called 'mild'. Both these should be given up by the spiritual aspirant because calmness of mind and concentration are the essential pre-requisites for an aspirant. One can become fit for liberation only if he gives up the desire for objects of sense. The way to do this is to remember always the adverse consequences of the enjoyment of sense pleasures. Even mental preoccupation with the objects of desire should be given up, because it is the seed of all evils. It is said in the Bhagavadgita that dwelling mentally on objects leads to attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to longing for the object. If the desire is not fulfilled, anger results. Anger makes a person forget all the good lessons that he has learnt, and this in turn results in loss of discrimination. Ultimately he becomes unfit for spiritual progress. (Gita, 2.62-63).

The tendency to think of objects of desire can be overcome by meditating on Isvara, which will lead to meditation on Nirguna Brahman and to liberation. When the mind is thus controlled, it becomes calm and free from all modifications. When one realizes that the phenomenal world has no absolute reality, one experiences the bliss of Nirvana. Such a person is not merely a knower of Brahman; he is Brahman itself.

Chapter - 5
Mahavakyaviveka - Understanding the import of the 'Mahavakyas'

In this chapter the meaning of four Mahavakyas from the four Vedas is explained.

The first Mahavakya taken for explanation is 'Prajnanam Brahma' (Aitareya Upanishad, 3.1.1 in the Rigveda). This means that Brahman is pure Consciousness. It is because of this Consciousness that all creatures are able to see, hear, smell, speak and distinguish different tastes.

The same consciousness enlivens gods, men and all other creatures. This consciousness is Brahman.

The next Mahavakya is 'Aham Brahma asmi' (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1.4.10 in the Sukla Yajurveda), which means 'I am Brahman'. The infinite, supreme Brahman, which, as the indwelling Self of all, is the witness of all the functions of the intellect, is known as 'I'. The person who has acquired the necessary qualifications such as control of the senses, control of the mind, total detachment towards all pleasures and an intense yearning for liberation is fit to realize his identity with this Self.

The Mahavakya in Chandogya Upanishad (6.8.15) in the Samaveda is 'Tat tvam asi', which means 'That thou art'. Before the creation of the universe there existed only one non-dual Existence without name and form. Even now it exists in the same condition (but with the universe of names and forms superimposed on it by Maya). This Existence is indicated by the term 'That'.

The indwelling self in individual beings that transcends the body, mind and senses is indicated by the term 'thou'. The identity of 'That' and 'thou' is expressed by the term 'asi'.

The Mahavakya 'Ayam atma Brahma' is in the Mandukya Upanishad in the Atharvaveda. This means that the indwelling self in every creature is Brahman.

The identity declared in the above-mentioned Mahavakyas is not with reference to the primary meanings of the terms, but only with reference to their implied meanings. This has been elaborated in the summary of chapter 1, which may be referred to.

How knowledge arises from the Mahaavaakya - two theories.

According to one theory, known as the prasankhyaana theory, attributed to Mandana Misra, the knowledge which arises from the Mahavakya is relational and mediate, like any other knowledge arising from a sentence. Such a knowledge cannot apprehend Brahman which is non-relational and immediate. Meditation (prasankhyaana) gives rise to another knowledge which is non-relational and immediate. It is this knowledge that destroys nescience.

The view of Suresvara is the opposite of the above. Knowledge of Brahman arises directly from the Mahavakyas. According to him also, meditation is necessary, but it is only for perfecting the hearing. The difference between the two theories is that, while, according to Suresvara, the knowledge which arises from the Mahavakya is immediate and non-relational, according to the other theory this knowledge is only mediate and relational. For an elaborate discussion Suresvara's Naishkarmyasiddhi may be referred to.

Following the view of Mandana, Vachaspati Misra holds that the mind is the instrument for the attainment of Self-knowledge. Following the other view stated above, Prakasatman, the author of Vivarana says that the Mahavakya itself is the instrument, though the knowledge no doubt arises in the mind.

The Mahavakya gives rise to Self-knowledge by making the mind take the form of Brahman. The question arises - since Brahman has no form, what is meant by saying that the mind takes the form of Brahman (akhanda-aakaara-vritti)? This is explained by Vidyaranya in Jivanmuktiviveka, chapter 3 by taking an example. A pot made of clay is full of the all-pervading space as soon as it is made. Filling it afterwards with water, rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc, in the pot can be removed, the space inside can never be removed. It continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot is hermetically sealed. In the same manner, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the consciousness of the self. It takes on, after its birth, due to the influence of virtue and vice, the form of pots, cloths, colour, taste, pleasure, pain, and other transformations, just like melted copper, cast into moulds. Of these, the transformations such as colour, taste and the like, which are not-self, can be removed from the mind, but the form of the self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed at all. Thus, when all other ideas are removed from the mind, the self is realized without any impediment. It has been said-"One should cause the mind which, by its very nature, is ever prone to assume either of the two forms of the Self and the not-Self, to throw into the background the perception of the not-Self, by taking on the form of the Self alone". And also - "The mind takes on the form of pleasure, pain and the like, because of the influence of virtue and vice, whereas the form of the mind, in its native aspect, is not conditioned by any extraneous cause. To the mind devoid of all transformations is revealed the supreme Bliss". Thus, when the mind is emptied of all other thoughts Self-knowledge arises.

The meaning of the Mahavakya 'aham brahma asmi'

This Mahavakya is explained by Suresvara in Naishkarmyasiddhi, 2.29 thus:- Just as in the sentence, "This post is a man", the earlier cognition that there is a post is sublated by the subsequent cognition that it is a man (and not a post), the cognition "I am Brahman" removes entirely the cognition as "I".

Sures'vara explains the statement aham brahma asmi, (I am Brahman), through what is known as baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. In a sentence in Sanskrit, words which, having the same case-endings, denote one and the same thing are said to be in samaanaadhikaranam. The relation between the words is called saamaanaadhikaranyam. This relation is of two kinds, mukhya saamaanaadhikaranyam and baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. In the former, the objects denoted by the words will have the same ontological status (or the same order of reality). For example, in the sentence, the pot-space is but the great (outer) space, the space within the pot and the great space are both empirically real (vyaavahaarika satyam). The difference between them is only due to the upaadhi in the form of the pot. When the upaadhi is removed, they become one, which they really are, even earlier. But if the words of a sentence, having the same case-endings, denote objects which have different ontological status, and if they purport to convey only one idea, they are in baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaranyam. For example, in the statement "This post is a man", the words "post" and "man" have different ontological status. Since what exists is a man and not a post, "man" is empirically real (vyaavahaarika) and "post" is only apparently real (praatibhaasika). Thus, just as the idea that what is seen is a post is removed when the person hears the statement "This post is a man", the wrong cognition of the form 'I am a man', 'I am happy' etc, is removed when a person realizes that he is Brahman on hearing the statement aham brahma asmi.

The essence of the entire universe is Brahman. The same Brahman is the self-luminous indwelling self or atma.

Chapter - 6
Chitradeepa - The Picture on Pure Consciousness

The titles of chapters 6 to 10 contain the word 'dipa' which means 'lamp'. This word denotes the Consciousness aspect of Brahman which is dealt with in these chapters.

The supreme Self is explained by comparison with the canvas on which a picture is drawn. Just as there are four stages in the painting of a picture, there are four stages in the apparent modification of the supreme Self. In the painting of a picture the four stages are, a clean white canvas, the canvas stiffened with starch, the canvas with outlines drawn on it with a black pencil, and the canvas with colours applied to the picture. The corresponding four stages with regard to the Self are, pure Consciousness, Consciousness as the indwelling controller in all beings, Consciousness as associated with the totality of subtle bodies, and Consciousness as associated with the totality of gross bodies.

Just as in a picture there are superior and inferior objects, there are in the universe various grades of beings from Brahma and other gods to human beings, animals, birds, etc. In a picture human beings are painted as wearing clothes of different kinds, and the clothes painted appear to be as real as the canvas on which the pictures are painted. All the forms in the universe are superimposed on Brahman which is pure consciousness. This consciousness is reflected in these forms and the forms with the reflection of consciousness in them are known as Jivas. The Jivas go through the cycle of repeated births and deaths. Ignorant people would think that the clothes painted in a picture are as real as the canvas itself. Similarly, ignorant people think that the transmigrations of the Jivas are undergone by pure consciousness itself. Just as the inanimate objects in a picture are not painted as dressed in clothes, inanimate objects in the universe do not have the reflection of consciousness in them. The wrong notion that transmigration is real and that the Self, which is pure consciousness, is subject to it is what is called 'Avidya' or nescience. This nescience is removed by the knowledge of the real nature of the Self. Transmigration is only for the Jiva, which is a reflection of the Self, and not for the Self. This understanding is knowledge and it is gained by enquiry. Therefore one should always enquire into the nature of the Jiva, the universe and the supreme Self. When the Jiva and the universe are negated, the pure Self alone remains as the only reality. Negation does not mean that the Jiva and the universe cease to be perceived, as that happens even in deep sleep or in a faint. Negation means the conviction that the Jiva and the universe do not have absolute reality and that they are only 'mithya', i.e., they have only empirical reality.

The knowledge that Brahman exists is only mediate (paroksha) knowledge. The knowledge 'I am Brahman' is called realization.

The same Brahman is spoken of in four ways: as 'kutastha' or immutable, Brahman, Jiva and Isvara, just as the same space is spoken of as pot-space, all-pervading space, space conditioned by water and space conditioned by a cloud. The sky with clouds and stars reflected in a pot of water is known as space conditioned by water. The sky reflected in the water particles in a cloud is known as space conditioned by a cloud. The Self or pure Consciousness which is the substratum on which the gross and subtle bodies are superimposed, and which is not affected by any change in the two bodies, is known as 'kutastha' or immutable, since it is changeless, like the 'kuta' or anvil on which the goldsmith fashions his jewellery. The reflection of the Self in the subtle body is the Jiva or individual who goes from one birth to another (transmigrates). He is known as the Jiva because he is animated by prana (the vital air). (The verbal root 'jiva' means 'to be endowed with prana' or vital air). Because of nescience which is beginningless, the jiva identifies himself with the body and does not realize that he is in reality the kutastha or Brahman. This nescience has two powers; the power to conceal Brahman,

known as Avarana sakti and the power to project the universe, known as Vikshepa sakti. The power to conceal Brahman makes the jiva totally ignorant of the existence of Brahman. Because of the power of projection, the jiva experiences the subtle and gross bodies and looks upon them as real. This is what is known as the superimposition of these bodies on Brahman. It is like a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light when the rope is not clearly seen. Because of such superimposition caused by nescience, the mind, with the reflection of Consciousness in it, is mistakenly thought to be the pure Self or Consciousness itself. The mind with the reflection of consciousness in it is known as the 'ego' or 'Ahankara'.

Brahman or pure Consciousness is the substratum on which all animate beings as well as inanimate objects are projected. The animate beings have life and are able to function because they have a subtle body which receives the reflection of pure Consciousness. Because of this reflection of Consciousness they themselves appear to have consciousness, just as the moon shines because of the reflection of the light of the sun on it. The inanimate objects do not have a subtle body to receive the reflection of Consciousness. Death is the separation of the subtle body from the gross body. When the subtle body departs from the gross body, the living being becomes lifeless.

It is nescience that conceals the real nature of the Self and makes the Jiva identify himself with the body. This concealment as well as the wrong identification cease when nescience is destroyed. But as long as the praarabdha karma which gave rise to the present body lasts, the mind and body, which are the effects of nescience continue.

The word 'karma' is used in two different senses in Vedanta - (1) the results of actions performed, in the form of merit and demerit (punya and paapa), which produce their effects later on, usually in another birth, and (2) the action itself, whether secular or religious. Here we are speaking about karma in the first sense. This karma is of three kinds - known as sanchita, praarabdha and aagaami. The karma accumulated over innumerable past lives is known as sanchita karma. Out of this, a portion gives rise to the present birth. This portion is known as praarabdha karma, meaning 'what has already started (aarabdha) giving its effect'. The karma that results from the actions performed during this life is known as aagaami karma. This gets added to the sanchita karma. On the dawn of Brahmajnaana the entire sanchita karma as at that time is destroyed. Actions performed after the dawn of knowledge do not produce any karma because identification with the body-mind complex, which is the cause of karma, has ceased to exist. Thus there is no further aagaami karma. But praarabdha karma is not destroyed by knowledge. It continues to give its results until it is exhausted. Therefore the present body-mind complex continues to exist till the exhaustion of the

praarabdha karma. But since the jnaani does not identify himself with his body and mind, he is not affected by whatever happens to them, but remains established in his real essence as Brahman. This is the state known as 'jivanmukti' or liberation-in-life. (Reference may be made in this context to Sri Sankara's Bhashya on the following:- Br.up.1.4.7., Br.up.1.4.10.,Ch.up.6.14.2., Br.up.4.4.22., Bhagavadgita, 4.37).

Various views are held by different schools regarding the Self. One group of Lokayatas (materialists) consider the physical body to be the Self. Another group holds the senses to be the Self, another the vital airs, another the mind, and yet another the intellect. All these are undergoing changes all the time and so they cannot be the Self which is changeless. The Buddhists say that perception, as well as the objects of perception are creations of illusion. The Vedantins reject this view by pointing out that there can be no illusion without a substratum. There can be no illusion of a snake without a rope as the substratum. The Buddhists hold that there is only void, but even a void must have someone to witness it; otherwise it would be impossible to say that there is a void. We are therefore led to the conclusion that there must be a changeless substratum for the changing universe. That substratum is Brahman or the Self. There are also different views about the size of the Self. Some hold that it is atomic, some that it is all-pervading and some that it is of medium size.

The Vedantins hold that the Self is pure consciousness, infinite, devoid of parts and all-pervading. Maya or Prakriti, which is the power of Brahman is neither real nor unreal; it is indeterminable. Maya can be looked upon in three ways. For the ordinary people it is real. For the enlightened person (jnaani) it does not exist at all. For those who try to understand Maya through reasoning it is indeterminable. Maya projects the universe without in anyway affecting Brahman. Making the impossible happen is the nature of Maya.

Brahman reflected in Maya is Isvara. Isvara controls Maya, but the jiva is under the control of Maya. Isvara is the indweller and inner controller (antaryaami) in every living being. He is omniscient and is the cause of the universe. He causes the manifestation of the universe and creates beings in accordance with their past karma. Creation is like the unrolling of a painted canvas. If the painted canvas is rolled up, the picture is no longer visible. In the same way, when the karma of living beings is exhausted, Isvara withdraws the universe into Himself. Then the universe and all beings remain in a latent form till the commencement of the next cycle of creation. Isvara is the cause of the inanimate objects through the tamasic aspect of Maya. He is the cause of the jivas through the reflection of pure consciousness in Maya. Brahman is unconditioned by Maya, while Isvara is conditioned by Maya and is the creator of the universe. The Upanishads declare that Brahman is

reality, consciousness and infinity. The sense organs and the mind cannot grasp it.

Hiranyagarbha is the totality of the subtle bodies of all jivas. Virat is the totality of all gross bodies.

The whole world is a creation of Isvara and jiva. From the determination of Isvara to create, down to His entrance into the created objects as the inner controller, is the creation of Isvara. From the waking state to liberation is the creation of the jiva.

A person who has realized his identity with the changeless Self that is pure Consciousness is not affected by anything that happens to the body.

Detachment, knowledge of the Reality and giving up desire-prompted actions mutually assist one another. Detachment arises from the realization that the happiness arising from objects is impermanent. Knowledge of the Reality is attained by hearing the scriptures, reflecting on them and meditation. Cessation of desire-prompted activities results from control of the mind. Of these three, the knowledge of the Reality is the most important. These three come to a person who has acquired a vast store of merit (punya) in innumerable past lives. The summit of detachment is the total absence of desire even for the pleasures of the world of Brahma (the Creator God). The summit of the knowledge of the Reality is reached when a person experiences his identity with the supreme Self as firmly as an ordinary man identifies himself with his physical body. The height of cessation of desire-prompted activities is the complete forgetfulness of all worldly affairs even in the waking state as in the state of deep sleep.

Enlightened people may behave in different ways according to their fructifying karma, but there is no difference in their knowledge of the Reality or in the nature of their liberation.

The universe is like a picture drawn on the supreme Brahman. When we ignore the distinctions, which are all caused by Maya, pure Consciousness alone remains.

This chapter, when regularly studied, frees the intelligent aspirant from the delusion that the world is real, even though he may continue to see the world as before.

Chapter - 7
Triptidipa - Fulfillment on Realization of Pure Consciousness

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4.4.12, says that a person who has realized that he is the pure Self (Brahman) will not afflict his body for the fulfillment of any desire. This statement is analyzed thoroughly in this chapter to enable us to understand the state of perfect bliss of a liberated person.

Isvara and the jivas are both reflections of Brahman in Maya. The whole universe is the creation of Isvara and the jivas. From the determination of Isvara to create, down to his entrance into the created objects, is the creation of Isvara. (The term 'entrance' means only the presence of Isvara as the Antaryami or inner controller in all jivas). From the waking state up to liberation, which constitutes 'samsaara', is the creation of the jiva.

The universe appears on the substratum Brahman which is pure consciousness, the Self of all beings and immutable. The reflection of Brahman in the intellect is known as chidaabhaasa. Because of mutual superimposition between Brahman and the intellect, the chidaabhaasa identifies itself with the intellect. The chidaabhaasa identified with the intellect is the jiva. The jiva looks upon himself as an agent and an enjoyer. Because of identification with the gross and subtle bodies, the jiva attributes to himself the joys and sorrows which pertain to the bodies alone. When the jiva gives up his identification with the bodies he realizes that he is the substratum, Brahman, which is pure consciousness and devoid of association with anything.

A story is told in Vedantic works to illustrate how knowledge of the reality dawns as a result of hearing from a guru the mahavakya 'That thou art'. Ten ignorant villagers crossed a river. On reaching the other bank one of them counted their number to see if all of them had reached safely. He counted only nine and felt that one of them must have been drowned in the river. Each of the others then counted and got the same result. When they were grieving about the loss of one of them, a man who was passing by offered to count their number. After counting nine, when he came to the last man he told him, "You are the tenth". Each one then realized that he had forgotten himself while counting, because of his ignorance. In the same way, every human being has forgotten his real nature and realizes it only when instructed by a competent teacher with the mahavakya 'That thou art'.

There are seven stages in the process of realization of the Self. They are, ignorance, obscuration, super-imposition, indirect or mediate knowledge, direct or immediate knowledge, cessation of sorrow and a sense of supreme fulfillment. The jiva is ignorant of the truth that he is Brahman in essence. Because of this ignorance he says that Brahman is not manifest and does not

exist. This is obscuration. He looks upon himself as a doer and an enjoyer because of identification with his body and mind. This is super-imposition. When he is instructed by a competent teacher, he gets the knowledge that Brahman exists. This is mediate or indirect knowledge. Then by acquiring the requisites such as detachment, etc., and reflecting and meditating on the teachings, he realizes that he is Brahman and remains established in that experience. This is direct or immediate knowledge. Now he is free from the wrong notion that he is a doer and an enjoyer. With this all sorrows come to an end. He feels that he has accomplished the ultimate goal of life and has a sense of supreme fulfillment.

The statement in the Upanishad that before creation Brahman alone existed (Ch.up. 6.2.1) gives indirect knowledge (paroksha jnana) of Brahman. The statement 'That thou art' (Ch.up. 6.8.7) gives direct knowledge (aparoksha jnana) of Brahman. The sage Bhrigu acquired indirect knowledge of Brahman from the indicatory statement that Brahman is that from which the universe arises, that by which it is sustained and that into which it merges. He got direct knowledge of Brahman by enquiry into the five sheaths. (Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhrigu valli).

In the statement 'That thou art', the word 'thou' primarily denotes pure Consciousness or Brahman limited by the mind, which is what is denoted by the word 'I'. Pure Consciousness conditioned by Maya is Isvara who is omniscient and is the cause of the universe. He is primarily denoted by the word 'That'. The entities denoted by the primary meanings of these two words possess totally contradictory qualities and so there can be no identity between them. The identity is only between the implied meanings. This point has been dealt with in detail in chapter 1.

When this identity between the jiva and Brahman is realized, there remains only pure consciousness which is absolute bliss. The view held by some schools that the mahavakya can give only indirect knowledge of Brahman is wrong.

The difference between jiva and Brahman consists only in the fact that the former has the upadhi or limiting adjunct in the form of the mind, while the latter does not. But for this adjunct the two are identical. Just as a reflection exists only as long as there is a reflecting medium, jivahood exists only as long as the mind, which is the reflecting medium, exists.

In the mahavakya, 'Aham Brahma asmi', which means 'I am Brahman', the primary meaning of 'I' is the blend of the pure self and the mind. The implied meaning of 'I' is the pure self alone. The identity is thus between this pure self and Brahman.

There is a distinction between the cognition of an external object such as a pot, which is of the form 'this is a pot' and the direct knowledge of Brahman, which is of the form 'I am Brahman'. In the former case, the mind first becomes modified in the form of the pot. This modification is known as vritti. This vritti removes the ignorance covering the pot. Then the reflection of Brahman or pure Consciousness on the vritti produces the knowledge 'this is a pot'. In the case of the knowledge of Brahman also, there is a vritti in the form of Brahman, known as akhanda-aakaara-vritti. After this, the second step of the reflection of Brahman falling on the vritti is not necessary here, because Brahman is self-luminous, unlike inert objects. This is similar to the difference between perceiving a pot and perceiving a lighted lamp. In the former case both the eye and a light are necessary, but in the latter case another light is not necessary. Therefore, while in the case of external objects the reflection of Brahman in the vritti is necessary, in the case of realization of Brahman it is not necessary. The reflection of Brahman or Consciousness in the vritti is known as 'phala'. Thus the cognition of an external object is brought about by 'phala', but the direct knowledge (which is called realization) of Brahman is brought about by the vritti itself, without the aid of any phala. It is therefore said in Vedanta that all objects are 'phala vyapya', while Brahman is 'vritti vyapya'.

It has been stated above that the mind takes the form of Brahman. The question arises- since Brahman has no form, what is meant by saying that the mind takes the form of Brahman? This is explained by Svami Vidyaranya himself in Jivanmuktiviveka, chapter 3, by taking an example. A pot made of clay is full of the all-pervading space as soon as it is made. Filling it afterwards with water, rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc, in the pot can be removed, the space inside can never be removed. It continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot is hermetically sealed. In the same manner, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the consciousness of the self. It takes on, after its birth, due to the influence of virtue and vice, the form of pots, cloths, colour, taste, pleasure, pain, and other transformations, just like melted copper, cast into moulds. Of these, the transformations such as colour, taste and the like, which are not-self, can be removed from the mind, but the form of the self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed at all. Thus, when all other thoughts are removed from the mind, the self is realized without any impediment. It has been said-"One should cause the mind which, by its very nature, is ever prone to assume either of the two forms of the Self and the not-Self, to throw into the background the perception of the not-Self, by taking on the form of the Self alone". And also - "The mind takes on the form of pleasure, pain and the like, because of the influence of virtue and vice, whereas the form of the mind, in its native aspect, is not conditioned by any extraneous cause. To the mind devoid of all transformations is revealed the supreme Bliss". Thus, when the mind is emptied of all other thoughts Self-

knowledge arises.

The mahavakyas such as 'That thou art' produce direct knowledge of Brahman, but this knowledge does not become firmly established because of defects in the mind such as doubts and wrong notions. It is therefore necessary to hear the scriptures, reflect on them and meditate on their purport repeatedly and also practise the disciplines such as control of the senses, control of the mind, etc.

'Hearing' is the process by which the conviction is attained that the identity of jiva and Brahman is declared throughout in the Vedas. 'Reflection' is satisfying oneself of the validity of what has been heard by the test of reasoning. Meditation removes the wrong notion, acquired over innumerable births, that the body is the Self and that the world is real. Concentration of mind is acquired by the worship of God.

A person who has realized that he is the self knows that the world is only an appearance on Brahman due to Maya and that it has no absolute reality. He is therefore not affected by the joys and sorrows of the world. But he engages himself in various actions solely for the welfare of the world, according to his karma. The karma which brought about the present birth (praarabdha karma) continues even after enlightenment, but the enlightened person remains undisturbed by whatever happens, while the ignorant persons suffers when anything adverse happens. When the realization that the world has no reality has become firmly established, there are neither desires nor the desirer. Consequently all sorrows cease, just as the flame of a lamp gets extinguished when the oil is exhausted. A spectator in a magic show who knows that the objects produced by the magician are not real merely enjoys the show and does not desire those objects. Similarly the enlightened person is convinced of the unreality of all worldly objects and does not harbour any desire for them. The efforts to earn wealth cause suffering; there is always anxiety about the safety of what has been earned, and there is grief when it is spent or lost. Thus wealth causes sorrow at every stage. All objects in the world which are sought by people hoping to get joy from them have their negative aspects. A wise man should see the defects and give up desire for them. All sorrows are caused by the erroneous notion that the objects and happenings in the world are real. Desires can never be quelled by enjoyment; they only increase, like fire fed by clarified butter. But when the impermanence of worldly pleasures is realized, gratification of desires brings about cessation of desire. One who has controlled his mind is satisfied even with a little enjoyment, because he knows that pleasures are impermanent and are followed by sorrow. A king who had been imprisoned by an enemy and is released will be satisfied by becoming the ruler of even a single village, whereas a king who has never been conquered by anyone else is not satisfied even with his kingdom.

The praarabdha karma functions in three ways-producing actions motivated by desire, producing actions without desire, and producing actions through the desire of another person. The first type is where the praarabdha karma itself produces desire and makes the person act for its fulfillment. The second is where even without desire a person is compelled by circumstances to undertake a particular action. An example of the third type is that of a realized person teaching his disciples in response to their sincere entreaties. Here it is the karma of the disciples that makes him take up the task of teaching them.

Whatever is destined to happen will certainly happen and what is not destined to happen will never happen in spite of all efforts. The realization of this truth will make a person free from anxiety and grief.

Praarabdha karma produces its effect for the enlightened person as well as for the ignorant. But while the ignorant person looks upon the results as real and enjoys or suffers, the enlightened person is indifferent to the result and is therefore never affected by sorrow or disappointment.

If a person carefully examines his experiences in the waking state and in dream, he will realize that they are very similar. He should then give up the notion that the objects in the world are real and become free from attachment towards them. This world of duality is similar to something created by magic. It cannot be explained logically. The wise man who remembers this will not be affected by the effects of his praarabdha karma. By the realization of Brahman the unreality of the world from the absolute point of view is realized. But this does not destroy the praarabdha karma which continues to give its effect until it is exhausted. Knowledge and the effects of praarabdha karma are not opposed to each other and can co-exist, just as a spectator can enjoy a magic show even when he is fully aware that what he sees is not real.

Control of the mind is essential for the realization of the unreality of the world. Even though desires may arise in the mind of an enlightened person, they do not bind him as in the case of an ignorant man, because he is free from all attachment. An enlightened person does not consider himself as a doer or enjoyer. This is what is meant by the statement in the first verse of this chapter that "a person who has realized that he is the pure Self (Brahman) will not afflict his body for the fulfillment of any desire".

The question as to who is the doer and enjoyer, whether it is the immutable Kutastha (Brahman) or the reflected consciousness (Chidaabhaasa) or a blend of the two, is now being examined. Enjoyment implies change as a result of identification with the experience of pleasure and pain. Since Brahman is changeless, it cannot be the enjoyer. The reflection of consciousness has no separate existence apart from pure consciousness and so it too cannot be the enjoyer. So it is generally thought that the blend of the

two is the enjoyer. But this too cannot be correct because the Sruti says that Kutatha or pure consciousness alone exists in reality. Because of ignorance the jiva attributes to himself the reality which is the nature of Kutastha alone. Consequently he thinks that his enjoyment is real and does not like to give it up. He wishes to have a wife, son, properties, etc, for his enjoyment. The Br. up. 2.4.5 says that wife, son and all others are loved by the jiva only for his own sake and not for the sake of the wife, son etc. A person loves his wife, son, etc, only as long as they give him happiness. One's own self is thus the object of unconditional love. Therefore a spiritual aspirant should acquire dispassion towards all objects of enjoyment in the world and direct his love towards the Self, which is his own self. He should keep his attention fixed on the Self at all times and differentiate the body from the Self.

It is common experience that the states of waking, dream and deep sleep are distinct from one another. The experiences in each state are totally different from the experiences in the other two states. But the consciousness, which is the experiencer, is the same in all the states. When a person has realized the identity of his self with this pure consciousness, which is Brahman, he is released from the bondage caused by ignorance. This self, which is Brahman, is beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is the witness, ever blissful, and is neither the enjoyer nor the enjoyment, nor the object of enjoyment. When the self has been differentiated in this way, what remains as the enjoyer is the chidaabhaasa or jiva, who is also known as the intellect-sheath and who is ever undergoing change. This world is like a creation of magic and chidaabhaasa is part of it. By repeatedly differentiating the chidaabhaasa from pure consciousness one becomes convinced that the jiva has no existence apart from Kutastha and that the jiva is nothing but Kutastha. Then all desire for enjoyment of external objects ceases. A person harbours desire only for objects thought to be different from himself. When a person has realized that he is Kutastha or Brahman, there is no object different from himself, since everything is Brahman. He then no longer looks upon himself as an enjoyer of happiness or an experiencer of sorrow.

The physical body is subject to various diseases. The subtle body is afflicted by desire, anger, greed, etc. On the other hand, it experiences happiness when there is control of the mind and the senses. In deep sleep the jiva knows neither himself nor others. This is the state in which the causal body predominates. The causal body is the seed of sorrow in this birth as well as in future births. These sufferings are natural to these bodies. Chidaabhaasa, which is the reflection of pure consciousness in the mind, is however free from all these sorrows. But due to ignorance the chidaabhaasa identifies himself with the three bodies and considers himself to be suffering. When he realizes that he is not the bodies, but the Kutastha itself, he becomes free from all sorrow. The sruti says: "The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman".

By fixing his mind on Brahman alone, the jiva realizes that he is Brahman. But the jiva continues in the body until the praarabdha karma is exhausted. He is, however, a jivanmukta and remains established in the knowledge that he is Brahman. He enjoys total fulfillment. The satisfaction arising from external objects is limited, but the satisfaction arising from direct realization of Brahman is unlimited and absolute. The realized person has no further duties to be performed, and there is nothing more to be achieved by him. The onlookers may, out of ignorance, attribute worldly actions and qualities to him, but he is not in the least affected by such attribution, just as a bush of red gunja berries may be mistaken for a blazing fire by a person looking at it from a distance, but such an imaginary fire does not affect the bush in the least. Even the scriptures are no longer necessary for him. There is no more any need for meditation or Samadhi. He has attained all that was to be attained and has done all that was to be done. He may still engage himself in action for the good of the world. His senses may still perceive duality, but he knows that it is not real and so he is not affected. When he is in the midst of ordinary people he may behave like them, just as a father plays with his baby, pretending to be like it. When he is praised or blamed by other persons, he does not praise or blame them in turn, but behaves in such a way as to awaken the knowledge of the ultimate reality in them. The enlightened person has no duty other than awakening the ignorant to the reality.

The wise who study this chapter repeatedly will realize Brahman and attain the goal of perfect bliss.

Chapter - 8
Kutasthadipa - The Immutable Consciousness

In this chapter Kutastha or pure consciousness, which is eternal and immutable, is being distinguished from the reflection of pure consciousness in the modifications of the mind (vrittis) with the help of an example. When the rays of the sun fall on a wall, the wall is illumined and looks bright, though by itself the wall has no brightness. When the rays of the sun fall on a mirror and the rays reflected from the mirror fall on the wall, the wall looks even brighter. Similarly, because of the presence of pure consciousness within, the physical body acquires sentiency. When the mind functions through any of the sense organs and becomes modified into the form of an external object, the pure consciousness becomes reflected in this modification (which is known as vritti). Then the sentiency of the body becomes even more manifest because the person sees external objects, hears external sounds, etc. Even when there are no mirrors to reflect the rays of the sun the wall on which the sun's rays fall directly remains illumined. Similarly even when there are no vrittis of the mind, pure consciousness illumines the body and gives it sentiency. Even

in the state of deep sleep, when the mind and the senses are dormant, pure consciousness illumines the body.

The process of visual perception, according to Advaita Vedanta, is described in chapter 1 of Vedanta Paribhasha thus: Just as the water in a tank, issuing through a hole, enters, through a channel, a number of fields and assumes the shapes of those fields, so also the luminous mind, stretching out through the eye, goes to the space occupied by an object and becomes modified into the form of that object. Such a modification is called a vritti of the mind. This vritti removes the ignorance covering the object. Then the reflection of pure consciousness falls on the vritti and the person perceives the object. Before the rise of the vritti the object was not known. In other words, there was ignorance of the object. This ignorance becomes known only because of the pure consciousness or Brahman. Later, when the object is perceived, the knowledge of its existence also arises only because of pure consciousness. Thus the ignorance as well as the knowledge of any object arises only because of pure consciousness which is the witness of both. It is therefore said that all things are objects of the witnessing consciousness, either as known or as not known. It is only when the pure consciousness is reflected in the vritti of the mind that an object becomes known. The vritti, the reflection of consciousness in the vritti and the object itself are illumined by Brahman or pure consciousness; whereas only the existence of the object is made known by the reflection of consciousness in the vritti.

It is thus seen that the cognition of any object, such as a pot, is brought about by the chidaabhaasa or reflection of consciousness in the vritti, combined with pure consciousness or Brahman which is the substratum of the mind. The Naiyayikas hold that the cognition 'This is a pot' becomes known only through another cognition which they call 'anuvyavasaaya'. This view is not accepted by Vedanta, because it will lead to infinite regress, as the second cognition would need a third cognition to become known, and so on, ad infinitum. In Vedanta pure consciousness or Brahman itself takes the place of this anuvyavasaaya, and since Brahman is self-luminous it does not need another cognition. Therefore, the cognition 'This is a pot' is brought about by chidaabhaasa, but the knowledge 'The pot is known' is derived from Brahman or pure Consciousness. Thus the distinction between chidaabhaasa and Brahman has been brought out in respect of cognition of objects outside the body. The same distinction applies also in respect of cognitions within the body, because the chidaabhaasa pervades also the inner states such as desire, anger, the ego-consciousness, etc., just as fire pervades a red-hot piece of iron. All vrittis of the mind arise one after another. But vrittis are absent during deep sleep, swoon and Samadhi. The consciousness that witnesses the interval between two successive vrittis as well as the period during which vrittis are absent is called Kutastha. This is immutable.

The objects of internal cognition are the states of the mind such as happiness, sorrow, anger, etc. The mental modification (vritti) naturally coincides with them. The mind has not to go out to unite with them as in the case of external perception. So the mental states of happiness, etc., are said to be revealed by the witnessing consciousness itself, as soon as they arise. These cognitions are pratyaksha, or perceptual knowledge. Vedantaparibhasha says: "Being cognized by the witnessing consciousness itself does not mean that the mental states are the objects of the witness self without the presence of corresponding mental modifications, but that they are the objects of the witnessing consciousness without the activity of the means of knowledge such as the sense organs".

Chidaabhaasa, which is the reflection of pure consciousness in the mental modification, has a beginning and an end. But pure consciousness is eternal and immutable. Brahman or pure consciousness, its reflection in the mind and the mind itself are related in the same way as a face, its reflection and the reflecting medium.

With regard to the manner in which the appearance of the jiva is to be understood, there is a difference of opinion between the two main post-Sankara Advaita schools - the Vivarana school and the Bhamati school. According to Vivarana, the jiva is reflection (pratibimba) of Brahman in nescience, and Brahman as the prototype reflected is Isvara. This is known as the 'reflection theory'. The Bhamati view, which is known as the 'limitation (avaccheda) theory', is that the jiva is Brahman as delimited by nescience. The analogy for the former view is the reflection of the face in a mirror; for the latter view it is the delimitation of ether by a pot, etc. Swami Vidyaranya rejects the limitation theory by pointing out that if Brahman becomes a jiva by being merely delimited by the intellect, even a pot which is also pervaded by Brahman would become a jiva. He accepts a modified form of the reflection theory, known as aabhaasa-vaada, or 'semblance theory'. While according to the Vivarana theory the reflection is real and is identical with the prototype, in the semblance theory the reflection is a mere appearance, an illusory manifestation. In the reflection theory the apposition between the jiva and Brahman is through identification, like the identification of the space within a pot with the total space. In the semblance theory the apposition between the jiva and Brahman is by sublation, as in the case of the illusory snake and the rope, where one says: "What appeared as a snake is really a rope".

The jiva is in reality none other than Brahman, but because he identifies himself with his gross and subtle bodies he wrongly thinks that he is different from Brahman. When the jiva realizes that he is Brahman, the identification with the two bodies ceases. The sruti text, "All this is indeed Brahman" (Ch, up. 3. 14. 1) means that what appears as the universe is in reality Brahman.

Similarly, by the text, "I am Brahman" (Br. Up. 1. 4. 10), the identity of jiva and Brahman is declared.

Brahman has been described as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. As the support of the universe Brahman is Existence. As the cognizer of all insentient objects it is Consciousness. As it is always the object of love it is Bliss. Its relationship with the world is only as the substratum, like the relationship of the rope to the illusory snake. In fact, there can be no relationship between Brahman which is the only reality and the universe which is mithya, i.e., neither real nor unreal.

Both jiva and Isvara are reflections of Brahman in Maya. They can reflect consciousness, unlike the inert objects in the world. Though both the mind and the body are products of food, the mind is subtler than the body and so it can reflect consciousness. Similarly, jiva and Isvara are subtler than inert matter and so they can reflect consciousness.

In dream we ourselves create so many objects. So there is no wonder that Maya creates everything that we experience in our waking state.

Brahman is pure consciousness. Brahman reflected in Maya is Isvara, who is omniscient. Omniscience is possible only when there are things to be known. These things are the creation of Maya. So it will be correct to say that Brahman, which is pure consciousness, becomes a knower of everything only because of Maya.

Brahman is ever associationless and changeless. Brahman is the only reality. Since Maya is not real from the absolute point of view, bondage which is caused by Maya is also not real. If bondage is not real, release from bondage is also not real. So from the point of view of absolute reality, there can be no such thing as an aspirant for liberation or a liberated person. Bondage, release, aspirant and liberated exist only when we are speaking from the empirical point of view. This distinction between the two standpoints has always to be kept in mind. When what was taken to be a snake is found, with the help of a lamp, to be only a rope, no one would say that a snake was previously there, but has gone away and a rope has come in its place. On the other hand one would say that there never was any snake and there was only a rope all the time. Similarly, when a person becomes liberated, it would be wrong to say that the person was previously in bondage and has now become liberated. The correct position is that he was never in bondage, but was liberated all the time, though he wrongly thought that he was in bondage.

When it rains in torrents, the ether is not affected at all by it. Similarly pure consciousness is not affected by the phenomenal world which is the creation

of Maya. The enlightened person knows that he is the pure consciousness and so he is not affected by whatever happens in the world.

He who studies this chapter and reflects on it ever abides as the self-luminous Kutastha.

Chapter - 9
Dhyanadeepa - Meditation on pure Consciousness

According to the teachings of Vedanta, a person who has acquired the four preliminary requisites, namely, discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, total dispassion towards all pleasures in this world and in higher worlds, the spiritual disciplines such as control of the mind, control of the senses, etc., and intense yearning for liberation, attains liberation through hearing of the scriptures from a Guru, and reflecting and meditating on them. For those who, even after the study of the Upanishads, are not able to attain realization due to some obstruction, such as lack of subtlety of mind, meditation on the attributeless (Nirguna) Brahman is prescribed as an alternative means in this chapter. Such meditations are laid down in the Uttaratapaniya Upanishad.

Sometimes even by acting on a wrong notion one may by chance attain a desired end. For example, a man sees the gleam of a gem coming from a distance. Mistaking the gleam for a gem itself he runs towards it and gets the gem. Though he was wrong in thinking that the gleam itself was a gem, he succeeded in getting a gem. Such a notion which, though wrong, results in a successful conclusion, is called 'samvaadi bhrama'. Another person mistakes the gleam of a lamp for a gem and runs towards it, but is disappointed. Such a wrong notion is called 'visamvaadi bhrama'.

If a person mistakes mist for smoke and goes towards it expecting to find fire and accidentally finds fire there, it is called 'samvaadi bhrama'. A person sprinkles on himself the water of the river Godavari, thinking it to be the water of the river Ganga. He is purified, because the water of Godavari is also a purifier according to the scriptures. Here his mistaking Godavari water for Ganga water is 'samvaadi bhrama' because though it is an error, it leads to the desired result. A man in delirium because of high fever unconsciously repeats the name 'Narayana' and dies. He goes to heaven because of having uttered the name of the Lord at the time of death. This is another instance of 'samvaadi bhrama'. (In Srimad Bhagavata it is said; "The name of the illustrious Lord, whether uttered consciously or unconsciously, destroys a person's sins as surely as fire destroys a heap of wood; just as a powerful medicine has its effect, even if taken by chance by one who does not know its

potency, so has the Lord's name when uttered even by an ignorant person"- Bh. VI. 2. 18-19).

In direct perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana) and scriptural authority there are innumerable instances of samvaadi bhrama. The worship of images made of clay, wood and stone as deities is one such instance. In Chandogya Upanishad (Chapter 5) heaven, rain-god, earth, man and woman are to be meditated on as the sacrificial fire. These are also instances of samvaadi bhrama.

Samvaadi bhrama, though it is a bhrama (error), leads to a desirable result. So also, meditation on Brahman leads to liberation. Brahman with attributes which is meditated on, is not a reality (in the absolute sense) and so such meditation is samvaadi bhrama. Any upasana or meditation is based on looking upon one thing as another, such as the linga as Siva, salagrama as Vishnu, or Brahman with attributes (Saguna Brahman) as the ultimate Reality. It is therefore a bhrama.

After knowing the one indivisible homogeneous Brahman indirectly from the scriptures (getting paroksha jnanam), one should meditate identifying oneself with Brahman. The knowledge that Brahman exists, derived from the study of the scriptures, without the actual realization that Brahman is one's own Self, is what is known as indirect knowledge. It is like the knowledge of the forms of Vishnu and other gods. The knowledge of the form of Vishnu as described in the scriptures is not false, though indirect, because the scriptures are authoritative. One can know from the scriptures that Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, but he cannot be said to have direct knowledge of Brahman until he has realized Brahman as the inner witness within himself. The indirect knowledge is, however, not illusory. As long as identification with the body continues, one cannot realize one's identity with Brahman. The indirect knowledge of non-duality gained from the scriptures is not opposed to the perception of duality in the world. The perception that an image of Vishnu is made of stone is not opposed to the idea that the image represents Vishnu and to the worship of the image as Vishnu.

Indirect knowledge of Brahman can arise even from a single instruction by a competent preceptor. Like the knowledge of the form of Vishnu, it does not need any enquiry. The methods of worship have been laid down in the Kalpa-sutras by the sages, Jaimini, Asvalayana, Apastamba, Bodhayana, Katyayana and Vaikhanasa. These form limbs of the Vedas. Worship can be performed by a study of these and with the help of instructions from a knowledgeable person. But, for direct realization of Brahman the instruction of a preceptor, though essential, is not sufficient. In addition, the spiritual aspirant must perform reflection and one-pointed meditation. Want of faith obstructs the rise of indirect knowledge, but want of enquiry (i.e. hearing,

reflection and meditation) is what obstructs the rise of direct knowledge. The enquiry should be continued until realization. If one does not get realization in this birth even after practising enquiry till death, he will get it in a future life when all obstacles have been eliminated. By virtue of the practice of spiritual enquiry in a previous birth, Vamadeva attained realization even when he was in his mother's womb, says Aitareya Upanishad, 2.1.5.

If, in spite of the practice of enquiry over a long period realization does not arise, it is due to various impediments. Realization will dawn when the impediments are removed. A person who does not know that one of his ancestors had buried a large quantity of gold under the ground in the compound of his house lives in poverty. When someone who knows the secret informs him about the treasure, he collects it and lives happily. A monk could not attain realization because of his past attachment to a she-buffalo. His teacher instructed him to meditate on Brahman, looking upon it as the substratum of the buffalo. By doing so he was able to attain realization.

Some of the impediments are: intense attachment to sense-objects, lack of subtlety of the intellect, indulging in perverse arguments about the truth of the Upanishadic teachings, and the deep-rooted conviction that the Self is a doer and an enjoyer. These should be removed by the practice of disciplines such as control of the mind, control of the senses, dispassion, etc., and enquiry into the nature of the reality. It is said in the Bhagavadgita that the spiritual development attained by a person in one life will not be lost on death, but will be with him in his next birth and will enable him to progress further from the stage reached (B.G.6.41-45). The essential condition for the attainment of realization is complete freedom from all desires, including desire for the pleasures of heaven and even of Brahmaloka.

If a person is unable to practice enquiry, he should keep his mind always fixed on the thought of Brahman. Just as it is possible to meditate on Brahman with attributes, it is also possible to meditate on the attributeless Brahman. The latter may be meditated on as being beyond the reach of the senses, speech and the mind. Meditation on Nirguna Brahman has been spoken of in the Nrsimha-uttaratapaniya Upanishad (1.1), Prasna Upanishad (5.5), Katha Upanishad (1.2.15-17), and Mandukya Upanishad (1.12). This meditation has been mentioned also in the Panchikarana Vartika by Suresvaracharya. It is a means towards the indirect knowledge of Brahman. The Self is indicated in the Upanishads by implication by means of positive attributes such as bliss, etc and also negatively as 'not gross', etc. One should meditate on the indivisible, homogeneous Self as 'That I am'.

The difference between knowledge (jnana) and meditation (upasana) is that the former depends on the object, while the latter depends on the will of the meditator. To explain, knowledge reveals an object as it actually is, but in

meditation an object is looked upon as representing something else. Seeing the sun as the sun is knowledge, but thinking of the sun as Brahman is meditation.

Knowledge of Brahman arises by the practice of enquiry. Such knowledge puts an end to the notion that the world is real. On the attainment of this knowledge the person enjoys permanent satisfaction and feels that he has accomplished the goal of life. He becomes liberated even while living and merely awaits the exhaustion of the karma which brought about his present birth (praarabdha karma).

A person who is not able to practise enquiry should meditate in the manner prescribed by his Guru with complete faith, without allowing his mind to be distracted by other thoughts. He should continue the practice of meditation until he becomes identified with the object of meditation and thereafter also continue it till the last moment of his life.

A diligent student of the Vedas recites them even in his dreams. Similarly, one who practises meditation without any distraction continues the meditation even in his dreams, because of the deep impression produced by the meditation in his mind. Such a person can meditate without interruption even while continuing to experience his fructifying karma, just as a worldly person keeps on thinking of the objects to which he is attached even while he is engaged otherwise.

A person who has realized that he is the Self (and not the body-mind complex) fulfills his worldly duties also well, because they do not conflict with his knowledge. The knowledge that the world is not real but only Maya and that the Self is pure consciousness is not opposed to worldly activities. In order to perform worldly activities it is not necessary to believe that the world is real. Only the right means are necessary. These means are the mind, speech, body and external objects. They do not disappear on the attainment of enlightenment.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures have no application to the enlightened. They apply only to those who look upon themselves as belonging to a certain caste or station or stage of life. The enlightened person knows that caste, stage of life, etc., are creations of Maya and that they pertain only to the body and not to the Self which is pure consciousness. The enlightened person whose mind is completely free from all desires and vasanas has nothing to gain from action or inaction, meditation or japa.

A person who meditates continuously attains identity with the object of meditation, but this identity ceases if the practice of meditation is given up. But the realization of the Self, once attained through knowledge, is never lost.

Every living being is in reality Brahman, but is ignorant of this fact. Knowledge only reveals this truth and does not create Brahmanhood.

Because of nescience which conceals their real nature, people do not realize the purpose of life. But just as begging is better than starving, it is better to practice devotion and meditation rather than other pursuits. Performance of the rituals laid down in the scriptures is superior to being engrossed in worldly affairs alone. Better than that is worship of a personal deity. Even better than that is meditation on the attributeless Brahman which leads to direct realization.

A samvaadi bhrama which leads to the desired result becomes valid knowledge (prama). Similarly, meditation on Brahman, when it ripens, leads to liberation and becomes knowledge of the reality. Though meditation on the form of a deity and chanting of mantras also lead to liberation, meditation on the attributeless Brahman is nearest to the goal of Self-realization.

Meditation on the attributeless Brahman matures into savikalpa samadhi in which there is still the distinction of meditator, the act of meditation and the object of meditation. This, when pursued, leads to nirvikalpa Samadhi where such differences vanish. There is then a perfect realization of Brahman as immutable, associationless, eternal, self-luminous, without a second and infinite, as declared in the scriptures.

Those who undertake pilgrimages and chanting of mantras instead of meditation on the attributeless Brahman may be compared to a person who licks his hand after dropping the sweets held by him.

Enquiry into the nature of the Self by hearing the scriptures from a teacher and then reflecting on them and practicing meditation is the direct means to Self-realization. Meditation on the attributeless Brahman is prescribed only for those who are unable to practise such enquiry.

If a person is not able to perfect his meditation in this life, he may attain liberation by acquiring Self-knowledge in Brahmaloka or in another life. The Bhagavadgita says that one attains that which he thinks of at the time of death (8.6). Thus the future life of a person is determined by his thoughts at the time of death. So the worshipper of a Personal God will attain identity with Him, and the meditator on the attributeless Brahman will obtain liberation.

One who studies this chapter and reflects on its contents is freed from all doubts and constantly meditates on Brahman.

Chapter - 10
Natakadipa - The lamp of the theatre

In this chapter the supreme Self is compared to the lamp which lights the stage in a theatre. The lamp illumines the empty stage before the play starts; it illumines the play when it is in progress; and after the play is over and there is no one on the stage, the lamp continues to illumine the empty stage. Similarly, the supreme Self which is self-luminous exists before the origination of the universe, during the period of appearance of the universe, and also after the dissolution of the universe.

Before the creation of the universe the supreme Self which is non-dual, infinite bliss, alone existed. Through its Maya it appeared as the universe of names and forms and entered into them as the jiva or the individual self. Entering into divine bodies, the same Self became all the deities such as Vishnu. Entering into the bodies of human beings, it became the worshipper of the deities.

As a result of the practice of devotion in many lives, the desire to enquire into his real nature arises in the jiva. When such enquiry and reflection attain perfection, Maya is negated and the Self alone remains.

As long as the jiva, who is in reality the Self which is non-dual and of the nature of supreme bliss, perceives duality and looks upon it as real because of ignorance, he experiences misery. This state of ignorance of his real nature and the consequent suffering is what is known as bondage. Realizing his own nature as the supreme Self and remaining established in that realization is liberation.

The jiva who is ignorant of his real nature identifies himself with his body and mind and looks upon himself as the performer of action and the enjoyer of the fruit thereof. The mind is his instrument of action. The mind undergoes a twofold modification, namely, internal and external. The internal modification takes the form 'I'. It makes him the performer of action. The external modification takes the form of objects which are referred to as 'this'. The external objects are cognized by the five organs of sense distinctively as sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. The consciousness which simultaneously illumines the agent, the action and the external objects is known as the 'witness'. While revealing all these, the witness remains changeless like the lamp illumining the stage in a theatre. The lamp reveals the patron, the performer on the stage, as well as the audience and continues to shine even when all of them have left. The witness-consciousness illumines the ego, the intellect and the sense-objects. Even when these are absent, as in deep sleep, the witness remains self-luminous. The intellect functions only in the light of the ever-luminous and ever present witness. In

the above illustration the patron is the ego, the various sense-objects are the audience, the intellect is the performer on the stage, the musicians playing on their instruments are the sense-organs, and the lamp lighting up all of them is the witness-consciousness. Just as the lamp lights up all these while remaining in its own place, the witness, which is motionless, illumines external objects as well as the states of the internal organ. The distinction as internal and external is only from the point of view of the body and not the witness. The ego is internal while objects are external. The qualities of the mind such as fickleness are wrongly attributed to the witness-consciousness by the ignorant. When the mind becomes absolutely quiet, the witness shines as it is.

The Self illumines all the modifications of the mind as the witness, but is itself beyond the grasp of speech and the mind. When the unreality of all duality is realized, the Self alone remains. Since the Self is self-luminous, its existence need not be proved by any pramana (valid means of knowledge). The Self can be realized as the witness of all the internal and external creations of the intellect if one hears the instruction of the sruti from a Guru and reflects on the teachings.

Chapter - 11
Yogananda - The Bliss Of Yoga

Chapters 11 to 15 expound the various aspects in which Bliss which is Brahman manifests itself. In this chapter it is pointed out that the bliss attained through the practice of Yoga is an aspect of the supreme Bliss that is identical with Brahman.

On the attainment of the bliss of Brahman one becomes free from all present and future miseries. He who realizes that he is the supreme Self and remains established in that realization becomes free from all fear; but he who perceives even the slightest difference from the Self is overcome by fear.

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that the deities Vayu, Surya, Agni, Indra and Yama are in constant fear of Brahman. They attained these positions as a result of very meritorious actions performed in previous lives, but because they have not realized their identity with Brahman they are still subject to fear.

One who has attained the bliss of Brahman does not experience any fear at all and is not troubled by thoughts such as whether he had done meritorious deeds or not, because his actions do not taint him. So says Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.9.1. Giving up all actions and going beyond all thoughts of good and evil, he ever remains engaged in meditation on the Self. He looks upon all actions as identical with the Self. All the desires which bind him are

destroyed, all his doubts about the Self are dispelled and all his actions perish in the sense that they do not cause any bondage for him. Only by realizing Brahman one goes beyond death and transmigratory existence. There is no other means to attain this end. All bonds are cut when the effulgent Self is known. All afflictions come to an end and he is not born again. One who has realized that he is none other than the supreme Self becomes free from all worldly joys and sorrows even while living in this world. He is not tormented by thoughts about his acts of commission or omission. The srutis, smritis and puranas repeatedly declare that the realization of Brahman puts an end to all sorrows and confers supreme bliss.

Bliss is of three kinds: The bliss of Brahman, the bliss born of knowledge, and the bliss derived from external objects. Of these, the bliss of Brahman is being described now.

Bhrigu heard the definition of Brahman from his father Varuna. By negating the sheaths of food, vital air. mind and intellect, he realized Brahman reflected in the bliss-sheath. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that all beings are born from bliss, they are sustained by bliss and they finally merge in bliss. (This statement is not elaborated in Panchadasi, but Ramakrishna, in his commentary named Padadipika, explains this verse as follows: Procreation is due to the pleasure derived from physical union, sustenance of life is due to the happiness derived from sense-objects, and happiness is experienced in sleep when the individual soul temporarily merges in the supreme Self). Therefore there is no doubt that Brahman is bliss. Before creation of beings there was only the infinite Brahman without the triad of knower, object known and the act of knowing. In dissolution also the triad will cease to exist. When the created world is in existence, the intellect-sheath is the knower, consciousness reflected in the mind-sheath is knowledge and sound, etc., are the objects known. Before creation none of these three existed. Before the creation of the world and in the states of Samadhi, deep sleep and swoon also the Self alone exists.

Bhagavan Sanatkumara told sage Narada that the infinite Self alone is bliss. There is no happiness in anything finite. (Ch.Up.7.23.1). Even though Narada had mastered the Vedas, Puranas and various scriptures, he still suffered misery because he had not known the Self. Before he began to study the Vedas he suffered only from the three kinds of afflictions natural to all human beings, namely, adhyatmika, those arising from bodily ills, adhibhautika, those caused by other creatures, and adhidaivika, those caused by calamities such as floods, earthquakes, etc. But after he had mastered the Vedas and other scriptures he was, in addition, burdened by the need to keep on reciting what he had learnt, and beset by the fear of forgetting what he had learnt, the fear of being defeated in argument and the pride of learning. So he approached Bhagavan Sanatkumara and prayed for the knowledge that

would lift him out of all sorrow. Sanatkumara told him that the ocean of sorrow could be crossed only by attaining Brahman which is pure Bliss. The happiness derived from external objects is always accompanied by sorrow. There is no real or unmixed happiness in the finite realm. It is true that there is no triad of knower, knowing and known in the non-dual Brahman and so there can be no experience of happiness as from sense-objects, but one who has realized Brahman remains as pure bliss. In deep sleep the bliss of Brahman is experienced though there are no objects and no triad. This bliss is therefore self-revealing. In deep sleep one does not suffer the miseries experienced during the waking state, caused by blindness, wounds and sickness. In deep sleep one is united with Brahman and so becomes bliss itself.

The Upanishads give various illustrations to describe the bliss enjoyed in sleep. A falcon, tied to a post by a long string, flies hither and thither and finally, when exhausted and in need of rest, goes back to the post to which it is tied. Similarly, the mind, after experiencing joys and sorrows in the waking and dream states, becomes absorbed in its cause, avidya, in the state of deep sleep. The jiva then becomes one with the supreme Self and enjoys bliss (Ch.Up. 6.8.2 and Br.Up. 4.3.19). A baby, having fed at the breast of its mother, and being free from attachment and aversion, lies in its bed, enjoying its natural bliss. A sovereign emperor, endowed with discrimination and having at his command all the virtuous pleasures within the reach of human beings, and consequently being free from further desire, remains as bliss personified. A great Brahmana who has realized Brahman remains established in the supreme bliss of enlightenment in the state of jivanmukti, having achieved all that was to be achieved. The innocent child, the discriminating emperor and the enlightened Brahmana are examples of supreme bliss. Others are subject to sorrow and not entirely happy. In deep sleep, however, everyone enjoys the bliss that is Brahman. In that state he is not conscious of anything internal or external, like a man in the tight embrace of his beloved wife (Br. Up. 4.3.21). The experiences of the waking state are external and those of dream are internal. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that in the state of deep sleep, a father ceases to be a father, a mother ceases to be a mother, worlds cease to be worlds, and so on (4.3.22). Thus all worldly ideas are absent. Then jivahood ceases and Brahman alone remains. Grief is the consequence of identifying oneself as father, son etc. In deep sleep, when such identification is absent, there is no sorrow. One who has woken up from sleep recollects that he slept happily and knew nothing. Recollection presupposes experience. In deep sleep the Self reveals itself as bliss and it also reveals ignorance. Brahman is self-luminous bliss. In deep sleep the mind and intellect remain latent in their cause, avidya. They become manifest when the person wakes up. The person then remembers his experience of happiness and total ignorance during sleep. The state of deep sleep in which the mind and intellect are latent is called the bliss-sheath.

When the person wakes up, the mind and intellect sheaths again become manifest. It is the sheath of bliss that is the enjoyer and it is the bliss of Brahman that is enjoyed. In the waking state the modifications of the intellect, which are the instruments of cognition, cover various objects of knowledge, but in deep sleep they become one undifferentiated mass of consciousness. In deep sleep there are no mental modifications in the form of sorrow. The state of deep sleep, in which bliss is enjoyed, ceases and the person wakes up when prompted by his karma. The impression of the bliss enjoyed in sleep remains for a short time after waking up. Then, impelled by his karma, he sets about performing his duties and gradually forgets the bliss of Brahman.

Even though everyone enjoys bliss during sleep, he does not realize that bliss to be Brahman itself. Mere intellectual knowledge about Brahman is not enough; Brahman should be realized as one's own self.

Whenever happiness is experienced even without any external object or any event to which it could be attributed, it should be understood to be the impression (vasana) of the bliss of Brahman. The happiness experienced on the fulfillment of any desire is due to the reflection of the bliss of Brahman in the mental modification (vritti). This happiness is called vishayananda, or happiness from the enjoyment of external objects. There are thus only three kinds of happiness: Brahmananda or the bliss of Brahman, Vasanananda or the happiness which is an impression of Brahmananda, and Vishayananda or the reflection of the bliss of Brahman in the mind. Brahmananda is self-revealing and it is what gives rise to the other two kinds of happiness.

The fact that the bliss of Brahman is self-revealing in the state of deep sleep is testified by the scriptures, by reasoning and by experience. The jiva is called Anandamaya in the state of deep sleep when he enjoys the bliss of Brahman. In the states of dream and waking the jiva is identified with the intellect-sheath or Vijnanamayakosha. The sruti says that in the waking state the jiva abides in the eye, in the dream state in the throat and in deep sleep in the lotus of the heart. In the waking state the jiva identifies himself with the gross body and looks upon himself as a man, woman, etc. He then experiences joys and sorrows. When at some time he is free from worries and at the same time is not experiencing joy from any external object, his mind is calm. Then he experiences the natural bliss of the Self. But this bliss is not the supreme bliss of Brahman, as the notion of egoity is also present; it is only an impression of the supreme bliss. This is like the outer surface of an earthen pot full of water being cold to the touch, even though there is no water outside. Just as the presence of water inside a pot can be inferred from the coldness of the outer surface, one can comprehend one's own nature of supreme bliss when one's egoity becomes extremely attenuated by continued practice. The bliss in which there is no experience of duality and which is not the state of deep sleep is the bliss of Brahman. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in

the Bhagavadgita that one should gradually withdraw the mind from all other thoughts and keep it fixed on Brahman. Whenever the mind, which is by nature restless and fickle, strays away, it should be restrained and again fixed on the Self. The Yogi who has made his mind perfectly tranquil and free from all taint, who is sinless and who has realized his identity with Brahman attains supreme bliss. When by the practice of yoga the mind is withdrawn from other objects and concentrated on the Self, the supreme bliss which is beyond the senses and which can be grasped only by the intellect, is attained. There is nothing higher than this state. The person who has attained this state is not disturbed even by the greatest calamity. Yoga is the state of being totally free from any association with sorrow. This Yoga must be practised with determination and a dispassionate mind. The Yogi who is free from all taint and whose mind is ever fixed on the Self experiences the supreme bliss of identity with Brahman. Control of the mind can be achieved by assiduous practice as pointed out in the story about the bird which set about to dry up the ocean by baling out its waters drop by drop with its beak. The story is that the eggs laid by a bird on the seashore were washed away by the waves. The angry bird decided to get back its eggs by drying up the ocean and began to bail out the water with a blade of grass. Sage Narada who was passing by happened to see the bird and was impressed by its determination. He went to Garuda and asked him to go to the rescue of a member of his own species who was pitched against the mighty ocean. Garuda came and threatened the ocean with severe punishment if it did not restore the eggs to the bird. The ocean then returned the eggs to the bird. The moral of this story is that if one has the necessary determination, divine help will come and enable him to achieve his objective.

Just as fire becomes extinguished when the fuel is exhausted, the mind merges in its cause when all modifications cease. When the mind is fixed on Brahman, the ultimate reality, all joys and sorrows resulting from praarabdha karma will be seen to have no reality. It is an ancient truth that the mind assumes the form of the object towards which it is directed. The mind is the cause of transmigratory existence. It should be purified with untiring effort. By the purification of the mind all the impressions left by actions, both good and evil, are destroyed. The purified mind abiding in the Self enjoys infinite bliss. If a person fixes his mind on Brahman with the same intensity with which people fix their mind on sense-objects, all bondage would be definitely eradicated.

The mind which is tainted by desires is an impure mind and the mind which is free from desires is a pure mind. The sruti says that the mind alone is the cause of bondage as well as liberation. Attachment to objects of sense leads to bondage and freedom from attachment is the means to liberation. The bliss arising from absorption in the contemplation of the Self, when the mind becomes cleansed of all impurities, cannot be described in words. It can only

be felt in the heart. The enlightened person always enjoys this supreme bliss inwardly even when he is outwardly engaged in worldly activities. The wise man gives up all desire for sensual pleasures and concentrates his mind on the Self so that he can enjoy that supreme bliss. A man whose mind is free from worldly concerns and is fixed on Brahman is not affected by any sorrows resulting from the operation of his fructifying karma. When worldly pleasures which are not opposed to Dharma come to him because of his praarabdha karma, without his seeking them, he looks upon them only as aspects of the bliss of Brahman. He experiences the bliss of Brahman in the waking state as well as in dream, because dreams consist only of the impressions left by the experiences in the waking state.

In this chapter is described the realization of supreme bliss by the Yogi.

Chapter - 12
Atmananda - The Bliss of the Self

The Yogi experiences the bliss of Brahman as stated in the previous chapter. In this chapter the bliss experienced by the unenlightened person is examined.

In the Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad it is said that everyone loves others only for his or her own happiness and not for the happiness of the person loved. The husband, wife, son, wealth, animals and all other things are loved only because they give happiness. This is evident from the fact that when a person's wife or son acts in a manner contrary to his wishes, he does not like them. Even an inveterate miser is willing to spend all his money to cure himself of a life-threatening disease, showing that his love of himself takes precedence over his love of money. All other things are loved only as long as they contribute to one's own happiness. So all other persons and things are only means to one's own happiness, and are not desired for their own sake; but happiness is desired for its own sake and not as a means to something else. A child, when kissed by its father feels pain by being pricked by the father's bristly beard and cries, but the father goes on kissing the child because he feels happy thereby. This is a clear instance to show that all love is only for one's own happiness. Love of the means to happiness shifts from one object to another, but love of one's own self ever remains the same. Even when a person desires to end his life because of poverty, disease, humiliation or any other reason, it is the body that he wants to get rid of and not the self. Thus the self is the dearest to everyone.

The word 'Self' is used in three different senses, namely, figurative (gauna), illusory (mithya) and primary (mukhya). In the sentence 'Devadatta is a lion', the identification of Devadatta with a lion is figurative. The purport of this

sentence is that Devadatta possesses some of the characteristics of a lion such as courage, majesty, etc. At the same time the difference between the two is also clearly understood. In the scriptures sometimes a son is identified as the self of his father. This identification is figurative.

When a post is wrongly taken to be a man the identification is illusory. The identification of the self with the body and mind which constitute the five sheaths falls under this category.

The primary meaning of the word 'Self' is the pure unconditioned witness-consciousness or non-dual Brahman.

When a person desirous of attaining heaven performs the prescribed yajna, he knows that it is his subtle body that will go to heaven and not his physical body. He thus looks upon his subtle body as his self.

An aspirant for liberation strives for the realization that he is the pure unconditioned Self. Here the word 'Self' is used in its primary meaning.

Supreme love is felt for the primary Self. One loves everything related to the Self, but the love for them is limited and conditional on their giving happiness. No love is felt for other things.

The degree of love towards various objects of enjoyment varies according to their proximity to the Self. A son is dearer than wealth, one's own body is dearer than one's son, the sense-organs are dearer than the body, life is dearer than the sense-organs and the Self is dearer than everything else.

A married couple intensely desires to have a son and is very unhappy till the wife conceives. After conception there is great worry about safe delivery. When the child is born there are anxieties about its health and whether all its faculties such as eyesight, hearing, etc., would be sound. When the child grows up there is worry about whether he would be intelligent and industrious in studies. Thereafter there is anxiety about whether he would earn well and become rich or suffer from poverty and also whether he would lead a good moral life or not. There is also anxiety about whether he would be healthy and live long or die prematurely. Thus there is no end to the sorrows of parents. The only way to avoid sorrows is to avoid attachment to persons and things and to focus his love on the Self. It should be noted here that attachment is different from love. Attachment puts one at the mercy of the person or thing to which the attachment is directed. But love, which by definition is free from any selfish motive, makes a person independent of the object of love. Love directed equally towards all living beings ennobles.

Love for the supreme Self is in effect love for all creatures, since they are not different from the supreme Self.

Since the Self is of the nature of bliss as well as consciousness, the question arises as to why bliss is not experienced in all modifications of the mind and only consciousness is experienced. This can be answered by taking the example of a lamp. When a lamp burns it emits both heat and light, but only light fills the room and not heat.

When the Self is both bliss and consciousness, how is it that when consciousness is revealed in a mental modification bliss is also not revealed at the same time? This is answered by pointing out that though an object has colour, odour, taste, and touch, only one of these properties is cognized by a particular sense organ. It is not correct to say that colour, odour, and other properties of a flower are different from each other and so the example given is not applicable because bliss and consciousness are not different from each other. The properties of a flower are not different from one another. If it is said that they are different because they are cognized by different sense-organs, then it must be pointed out that there is similarly a seeming difference between bliss and consciousness brought about by difference in the composition of the mental state. When Sattvaguna predominates in the mind, both bliss and consciousness are revealed, while when Rajoguna predominates, only consciousness is revealed and bliss is obscured.

The Lord says in the Bhagavadgita that there are two paths to liberation. One is Yoga and the other is the path of knowledge.

One who knows that the Self is dearest does not desire any external object of enjoyment. Nor does he have aversion towards anything because he sees no object inimical to himself.

Chapter - 13
Advaitananda - The Bliss of Non-Duality

The Taittiriya Upanishad says that the world is born from bliss, it abides in bliss and finally merges in bliss. This bliss is the same as Brahman. Brahman is thus the material cause of the world.

The relationship between the material cause and the effect is explained in different ways in the different schools. According to Vaiseshika, the effect is something new and absolutely different from the cause. This is known as Arambhavada.

The Sankhyas hold the view that the effect is an actual transformation of the cause, like milk changing into curd, clay into pot and gold into ornaments. This is known as Parinamavada.

In the case of a rope appearing as a snake, there is no real transformation. The snake is only a Vivarta or apparent modification of the rope. The appearance of the snake is due to ignorance of the rope. Similarly, the world is only a Vivarta of Brahman. Maya conceals Brahman and projects the world.

Maya is the power of Brahman. Power does not exist apart from its possessor. At the same time, power is not identical with its possessor, because even when the power is obstructed, its possessor remains the same. Power cannot be directly perceived, but can only be inferred from its effect. Maya, the power of Brahman, manifests as action, knowledge and will. The supreme unconditioned Brahman is eternal, infinite and non-dual. When associated with Maya, Brahman is described as omnipotent.

Brahman becomes manifest as consciousness in all living beings. Its power appears as movement in air, hardness in stone, liquidity in water, and heat in fire. Just as a tree with its branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc., is latent in the seed, so is this world latent in Brahman (before manifestation). When Brahman assumes the power of cognition it is called the mind. The notions of bondage and liberation arise in the mind.

In Yogavasishta it is said that a nurse narrated the following story to amuse a child. Once upon a time there were three handsome princes. Two of them were never born and the third was never even conceived. They lived righteously in a city which never existed. While moving about in the city the princes saw trees laden with fruits growing in the sky. Then they went to another city which had not yet come into existence and lived there happily, spending their time in games and hunting. The child believed all this to be true because of lack of discriminating capacity. In the same way this world is accepted as real by those who have no discrimination. Sage Vasishta described the power of Maya through such stories.

Maya is different from its effect as well as from its substratum. It can only be inferred from its effect, just as the burning power of an ember can be inferred only from the blister caused by it.

An effect is non-different from its cause. A clay pot is not different from the clay, because it has no existence apart from the clay. At the same time, the pot is not identical with clay, because it is not perceived in the un-molded clay. Therefore the pot has to be called indescribable, like the power which produced it. Because of this, the Chandogya Upanishad says that the pot is not real, being only a name, reality being attributed only to the clay (Ch.Up.

6.1.4). Of the three entities, namely, the product of power which is perceptible, the power itself which is not perceptible, and the substratum in which they both inhere, only the third persists; the first two exist by turns. So only the third is real. The pot has a beginning and an end. It is therefore not real. Before the pot was made it was only clay. When the pot exists, it is also only clay. After the pot is destroyed there is only clay. Thus clay alone is real. (It should be noted that this reality is only from the empirical point of view).

The illusory snake disappears when the substratum, rope, is known. But a pot continues to appear as such even after its substratum, clay, is known. So the question is, how can the pot be said to be illusory? The answer is that though the pot is still seen, it is realized that it has no reality apart from clay. The substitution of the notion that the pot has a reality of its own by the realization that it is nothing but clay with a particular name and form can be described as destruction of the pot.

The world is superimposed on Brahman. Even after the realization that Brahman is the only reality the world continues to be perceived by the realized person, but it is not accepted as real by him. He is not affected by the joys and sorrows in the world. It is in this sense that the world is said to have ceased to exist when Brahman is realized.

In an actual transformation, as in the case of milk becoming curd, the original substance, milk, disappears. But in the modification of clay into pot, or gold into ornaments, the substratum, clay or gold, remains as such. Chandogya Upanishad says that by knowing a lump of clay, everything made of clay is known. Similarly, by knowing Brahman the whole phenomenal universe is known. Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss, whereas the world consists of name and form.

Before the manifestation of the universe Maya remained unmanifest in Brahman. The Svetasvatara Upanishad says: "Know Maya to be Prakriti (the material cause of the universe), and the supreme Lord to be the Ruler (or substratum) of Maya". Name and form are merely superimposed on Brahman.

By the continuous practice of meditation on Brahman a person becomes established in the knowledge of Brahman. Then he becomes liberated from Samsara.

In dream a man sees impossible things happening, but at that time he does not even realize that they are impossible, but accepts them as correct. When such is the power of dream, what is there to wonder about the power of Maya which projects this universe and makes it appear real? The whole universe is only the projection of names and forms in Brahman by Maya. When one

realizes that all names and forms have no reality and rejects them he remains as the pure Brahman. Even if he continues to be engaged in worldly matters he is not affected by the joys and sorrows arising from them.

Just as a huge rock lying in the bed of a river remains unaffected even though water continuously flows over it, Brahman remains unchanged while names and forms keep on changing.

Realizing that Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss, one should keep his mind fixed on Brahman and restrain it from dwelling on names and forms. Thus the bliss of non-duality will be realized.

Chapter - 14
Vidyananda - The Bliss of Knowledge

In this chapter the bliss experienced by a person who has attained the knowledge (realization) of Brahman through one of the three paths described in the preceding three chapters, namely, the practice of yoga, discriminative knowledge of the Self, and constant contemplation of the unreality of duality, is described.

The happiness arising from external objects is a modification of the intellect. Similarly, the bliss arising from the realization of Brahman is also a modification of the intellect. This bliss has four aspects. These are absence of sorrow, the fulfillment of all desires, the satisfaction of having done all that had to be done, and the feeling of having attained the goal of life.

The jiva identifies himself with the subtle and gross bodies and thinks of himself as an agent (doer) and an enjoyer. The names and forms in the universe are looked upon as objects of enjoyment. When the jiva realizes that he is the supreme Brahman and gives up identification with the bodies, there is neither enjoyer nor objects of enjoyment. It is the identification with the bodies that is the cause of all desires, since all desires are for the comfort of the body. Sorrow results when a desire is not fulfilled. The knower of Brahman realizes that worldly objects have no reality and so he has no desire for them.

Just as water does not stick to the leaves of the lotus, actions performed after realization do not attach to the knower, because actions are performed by the body and the knower of Brahman has no identification with the body. The accumulated actions (sanchita karma) are burnt by the fire in the form of the knowledge of Brahman.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the Vedas do not have any application to the enlightened person. These are applicable only as long as one identifies oneself with the body and the mind. Any action performed by a realized soul is not action at all, because he has no sense of doership. Whatever action he performs is only for the welfare of the world and not for any benefit for himself, because he is the pure Self which has no desires. He enjoys supreme bliss. The present body continues till the praarabdha karma which brought it into existence is exhausted. On the fall of this body he will not be born again because there will be no karma left to give him another birth.

The bliss of the Self is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is superior even to the happiness enjoyed by Brahma and other gods.

Chapter - 15
Vishayananda - The happiness from external objects

In this chapter the happiness derived by the contact of the sense-organs with external objects is described. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that this happiness is only a particle of the bliss of Brahman (Br. Up. 4.3.32).

Mental modifications (vrittis) are of three kinds - calm (sattvic), agitated (rajasic) and dull (tamasic). The sattvic modifications are detachment, forbearance and generosity. The rajasic modifications are craving, attachment, greed, and the like. The tamasic modifications are delusion, fear, etc. The consciousness aspect of Brahman is reflected in modifications of all kinds, but the bliss aspect is reflected only in sattvic modifications.

The same supreme Self dwells in all bodies. Though it is only one, it appears as many, like the reflections of the moon in different vessels of water. The reflection of the moon is clear if the water is pure and faint if the water is muddy. Similarly, Brahman appears differently in different bodies, depending on the nature of the mental modification.

Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The existence aspect alone is manifested in inanimate objects, but not consciousness and bliss. This is because inanimate objects have no subtle body which alone can reflect consciousness and bliss. The consciousness aspect is manifested in all animate beings, even when the mind is agitated, for we see that even a person who is unhappy is conscious. But the bliss aspect is manifested only when the mind is calm. A doubt arises as to why, when Brahman has both the aspects of consciousness and bliss, only one of them, consciousness, is reflected in an agitated mind. When you look at the reflection of your face in a mirror, you find that the face in its entirety is reflected and not only some aspects of it. This doubt is answered by giving two examples. When water is

in contact with fire, only the heat aspect of fire is absorbed by the water and not the light of fire. But when a log of wood comes into contact with fire, it absorbs both the heat and the light aspects. Similarly, only the consciousness aspect of Brahman is reflected in an agitated mind, but both the consciousness and the bliss aspects are reflected when the mind is calm.

When there is some desire in the mind there is anxiety about whether the desired object will be attained or not. In such a condition there can be no happiness. But as soon as the desired object is attained, the mind becomes calm. The bliss of Brahman is then reflected in the mind. The happiness experienced then is wrongly attributed to the attainment of the desired object, while it is really due to the mind becoming calm. This happiness continues only till another desire arises and agitates the mind. When a person has attained complete detachment towards worldly pleasures and is free from desires, his mind is absolutely calm and then supreme bliss is experienced.

Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss. In inanimate objects such as stones, only the existence aspect is manifest, because they have no subtle body which alone can reflect consciousness. In all living beings both existence and consciousness are manifest. All the three aspects of Brahman are manifest in a mind that is predominantly sattvic.

Brahman is in reality devoid of all attributes. The multifarious names and forms in the world are superimposed on Brahman by Maya. For those who are incapable of meditating on the attributeless Brahman meditation on Brahman with attributes is prescribed in the scriptures.

When the non-dual, self-luminous, attributeless Brahman is known, there is no triad of knower, knowing and known. Then there is infinite bliss.

May the Lord who is both Hari and Hara protect all those who, with a pure mind, surrender themselves to Him.

Patanjali

By P. R. Kannan

SAGE PATANJALI, NATARAJA & MAHABHASHYAM

A well known prayer to Sage Patanjali, written by Bhojaraja refers to his major contributions in three distinct fields.

"योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ।

योपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोस्मि॥"

"I bow with folded hands before Patanjali, the foremost among sages, who removed the defect of mind with Yoga, that of words with grammar and that of body with medicine."

Sage Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are well known. Yoga has spread all over the world. However Patanjali is also credited with many other extraordinary achievements, as can be noted in the above verse. He is said to have written a work of reference on Ayurveda; this book is not available now, though some scholars think that Charakasamhita was indeed Patanjali's work. He is more famously known for his authorship of 'Mahabhashyam', a great commentary on Panini's Sutras on Sanskrit grammar, the Ashtaadhyayi. Above all, he, along with another great sage Vyaghrapada, had the first darshan of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu.

Darshan of Nataraja

Once when Lord Vishnu was lying on his serpent-bed in the Milky Ocean, Adi Sesha suddenly found that Vishnu was smiling in a state of extraordinary bliss and in that process his weight became unbearably heavy. Adi Sesha conveyed his pitiable plight to Vishnu and enquired of the reason for his sudden exuberance. Vishnu said: "I remembered my darshan of Lord Nataraja in Darukavana a long time back. I had at that time taken the form of Mohini and accompanied Siva, who was Bhikshatana. Siva wished to teach a lesson to the sages of Darukavana, who were immersed mechanically in the activity of Yagas and who wrongly interpreted the Vedas and thought that Karma alone, devoid of bhakti, would achieve Moksha. After the sages were enlightened on the correct import of Vedas and the necessity of bhakti, and the mission was accomplished, Siva, out of grace for the toiling sages, showed them the Cosmic Dance as Nataraja. I was a witness to that dance. My memory of that blissful occasion is fresh and that is why I became so happy." This created an insatiable desire in Adi Sesha to witness the dance of Nataraja. When he pleaded before Vishnu, the latter asked him to proceed to

Bhuloka and perform severe penance and please Siva. Adi Sesha appointed his son to serve as the bed for Vishnu in his absence and reached Bhuloka.

A woman by name Gonika, daughter of a certain sage, was offering Arghya to Surya. Adi Sesha took the form of a small snake and dropped down from the sky in her palms and on to the ground along with the Arghya waters. As he dropped from the cupped palms of the woman, he came to be known as Patanjali- पतन् अञ्जलितः- पतञ्जलि. The serpent form changed instantly into a boy with upper part of the body human and the lower, serpent. He left for forest in order to perform penance. After a long time Siva appeared in the form of Brahma and offered him the boon of lofty Siddhis (supernatural powers) and Vidyas. Patanjali declined and persisted in his aspiration to have darshan of Nataraja. Siva then asked him to proceed to Chidambaram. Patanjali pierced the ground, reached Nagaloka and came up through a Biladvara (mouth of cave) to Chidambaram. He established a Sivalinga in the western part of the town and worshipped intensely. This deity, known as Ananthiswara is ensconced in a small nice temple, adjacent to a tank called Nagacheri tank even today.

At the same time another sage known as Vyaghrapada was also praying with all his heart to Siva for darshan of Nataraja. He established and worshipped a Sivalinga, known as Sri Moolanatha. This shrine is situated inside the main Nataraja temple and can be seen even today. Vyaghrapada, who was earlier called Madhyandina, was the father of the famous sage Upamanyu. Mahabharata credits Upamanyu with praying to Siva even as a small child for milk and being blessed with the Ocean of Milk by Siva. He also initiated Lord Krishna into Siva mantra and taught him Siva Sahasranama Stotra. Vyaghrapada (meaning one with feet of tiger) had specially prayed to Siva and obtained the feet of tiger and eyes of bee in order to climb trees and pluck good flowers in the darkness of early mornings for use in Siva Pooja. So keen was he on being perfect in the worship of Siva. Both Patanjali and Vyaghrapada prayed very intensely for darshan of Lord Nataraja. Soon Viswakarma built the golden Sabha mantapam and made all preparations. On the sacred day of Pushya star in the month of Thai (Pousha), Siva with Parvathi alighted from his mount of bull with his left hand held by Vishnu. He blessed the two sages with divine eyes and danced ecstatically as Nataraja. The sages prayed to Nataraja that He should stay at Chidambaram for ever and grant darshan to all people at all times to come. Nataraja graciously agreed and has been there in the temple ever since, giving darshan to us all. On this occasion Nataraja asked Patanjali to write a commentary for Panini's Ashtadhyayi, the authoritative work on Sanskrit grammar.

Panini's Ashtadhyayi

Panini was a great sage, who, after a long penance, had darshan of Siva as Nataraja. At that time Nataraja sounded his Damaru (drum) fourteen times. These sounds were grasped by Panini as the famous fourteen Siva Sutras or Maheswara Sutras.

"नृत्तावसाने नटराजराजो ननाद ढक्कां नवपञ्चवारम् ।

उद्धर्त्तुकामः सनकादिसिद्धा-नेतद्विमर्शे शिवसूत्रजालम् ॥"

"Lord Nataraja sounded his Damaru fourteen times at the close of his dance. He thus brought out the Siva Sutras with a desire to uplift Siddhas like Sanaka and others."

These Sutras are:

१. अ इ उ ण्। २. ऋ ऌ क्। ३. ए ओ ङ्। ४. ऐ औ च्। ५. ह य व र ट्। ६. ल ण्। ७. ञ म ङ ण न म्।

८. झ भ ञ्। ९. घ ढ ध ष्। १०. ज ब ग ड द श्। ११. ख फ छ ठ थ च ट त व्। १२. क प य्। १३. श ष स र्। १४. ह ल्।

These Maheswara Sutras are regularly chanted during Vedarambham at the time of Upakarma. It is interesting that these very brief and esoteric assemblages of sounds yielded to two different interpretations leading to two streams of thought. One was the pinnacle of spirituality and Advaita Vedanta, and Kashmir Saivism. A commentary, known as Kaasika, of the Siva Sutras explaining this spiritual import was written by Nandi himself. Explanation of the first Sutra from Nandi's Kaasika is given below as an example.

अकारो ब्रह्मरूपः स्यान्निर्गुणः सर्ववस्तुषु ।
चित्कलामिं समाश्रित्य जगद्रूप उणीश्वरः ॥

"The letter अ represents Brahman, who is without attributes, even while pervading all objects. When Brahman unites with consciousness represented by the letter इ, he becomes Iswara, represented by the letter उ, who assumes the form of the universe."

The second interpretation relates to Sanskrit grammar. Panini, believed to have been born in Gandhara (Khandahar in present-day Afghanistan), wrote his famous commentary of the Siva Sutras, called Ashtadhyayi, which consists of 3,959 sutras or rules, distributed among eight chapters, each subdivided into four sections or padas. This is regarded as the seminal and path-breaking text on Sanskrit grammar. Celebrated as extremely compact without sacrificing completeness, it would become the model for later

specialist technical texts. It takes material from lexical lists (Dhatupatha, Ganapatha) as input and describes algorithms to be applied to them for the generation of well-formed words. It is highly systematised and technical. The rules have a reputation for perfection— that is, they are claimed to describe Sanskrit morphology fully, without any redundancy. Panini's sophisticated logical rules and technique have been widely influential in ancient and modern linguistics. One Katyayana wrote Vaartika (explanatory rules) for Panini's Ashtadhyayi.

Patanjali's Mahabhashyam

It was left to Patanjali to author a detailed commentary of Panini's Ashtadhyayi, as instructed by Lord Nataraja himself. Patanjali is one of the three most famous Sanskrit grammarians of ancient India, other two being Paṇini and Katyayana who preceded Patanjali. Katyayana's work (nearly 1500 vartikas on Paṇini) is available only through references in Patanjali's work. Patanjali's Mahabhashya covers only 1228 out of 3959 Sutras of Panini. It is in 85 Ahnikas or sections. Its diction is most elegant and has been considered as a model for Sanskrit prose. It was with Patanjali that the Indian tradition of language scholarship reached its definite form. The system thus established is extremely detailed as to shiksha (phonology, including accent) and vyakarana (grammar and morphology). Syntax is scarcely touched, because syntax is not important in this highly inflexional language, but nirukta (etymology) is discussed, and these etymologies naturally lead to semantic explanations. People interpret his work to be a defence of Paṇini, whose Sutras are elaborated in detail. Though Patanjali treats Katyayana's work rather severely, it must be noted that Katyayana introduced semantic discourse into grammar, which was further elaborated by Patanjali to such an extent that the Mahabhaṣhya can be called a mix of grammar as such as well as a *philosophy* of grammar.

Once Patanjali completed his masterpiece, he decided to teach it to a large number of disciples. At Chidambaram he gathered a thousand students and asked them to sit in front of a screen during classes and he used to sit behind the screen and teach, unseen by them. They had been instructed strictly by the teacher never to attempt to pull the screen and see him during the class. As teaching proceeded, the students noted that the teaching and clarification of doubts was so individual student-oriented that they developed serious doubts as to how this is humanly possible for a single teacher. Hence curiosity prevailed over discipline and some students pulled the screen away during the class one day. All of them were instantly reduced to ashes by the poisonous breath from the thousand-hooded serpent Adi Sesha, who was actually teaching them with a thousand different mouths. One student luckily had gone out for answering the call of nature, but he had left the class without

the teacher's permission. When he returned, he found all his class-fellows in ashes and begged for mercy of the teacher. Patanjali cursed him to become a Brahma-rakshasa, as he had violated the disciple's discipline of not leaving the class while in progress without permission. On the student's pleading, Patanjali relaxed the curse saying that he would be freed from the curse, if he found a student in turn, who could answer a tricky question in Sanskrit grammar. Patanjali now taught him the rest of the Mahabhashyam and allowed him to go his way.

The student turned brahmarakshasa travelled north and reached Central India. Sitting atop a tree, he questioned a lot of passers-by as instructed by Patanjali. None was able to answer correctly. The brahmarakshasa would immediately devour the victim. Many years passed thus. Taking pity on his student-brahmarakshasa, Patanjali decided to meet him as a passer-by himself. He called himself Chandra Sarma from Ujjain and met his former student. The brahmarakshasa asked him the usual question: "निष्ठायां किं रूपं पचे:"- "What is the past participle of the root पच्". Instead of the incorrect answer पचितं given by others, Chandra Sarma gave the correct answer पक्वं. The brahmarakshasa was relieved of the curse immediately. He then taught the entire Mahabhashyam to Chandra Sarma. In later years, the former student of Patanjali, who was freed of the terrible curse owing to Patanjali's mercy, proceeded to Badrinath and became the great teacher of Advaita Vedanta, Gowdapada. He wrote the famous Mandukya Karika, an explanatory treatise on Mandukya Upanishad. Chandra Sarma, who was in fact Patanjali, became Govinda Bhagavatpada, the illustrious disciple of Gowdapada. Govinda Bhagavatpada in turn became the teacher of Adi Sankaracharya.

Patanjali's Stotra

Patanjali has written a Stotra on Nataraja, which is known by the name of Charana Sringa Rahita stotram; it is also called Sambhu Natanam or Natesashtakam. The unique style of composition which the great grammarian has adopted in this Stotra is that, as the name indicates, there is no use of charana or sringa anywhere in the eight stanzas of the Stotra. Charana literally means foot; here it refers to दीर्घ, a long vowel, like in का. Sringa literally means horn; here it refers to the upper curved symbol like in कर्ता. It is interesting that Patanjali has composed a wonderful Stotra, which has a lilting tune of the jingle of the bells in the Dancing Nataraja's anklet, without using the two commonly used features of grammar. The first stanza is given below.

सदञ्चित-मुदञ्चित निकुञ्चितपदं झलझलञ्चलित मञ्जुकटकं
पतञ्जलि दृगञ्जन-मनञ्जनं अचञ्चलपदं जनन भञ्जनकरम् ।
कदम्बरुचि-मम्बरवसं परम-मम्बुद कदम्बक विडम्बक गलं
चिदम्बुदमणिं बुध हृदम्बुजरविं पर चिदम्बर नटं हृदि भज ॥ (१)

"Worship in your heart Nataraja, who is adored by the virtuous; has a raised leg with bent foot; wears beautiful bracelets making a jingling sound; who is like the purifying collyrium for the eyes of Patanjali; free from impurities; with feet which do not move; who destroys (cycle of) births; beautiful like the kadamba tree; who has sky as garment; supreme; whose throat resembles cluster of rain bearing clouds; jewel in the ocean of consciousness; Sun blossoming the lotus-heart of the wise; who dances in the most sacred Chidambaram (or, in the heart-space of the pure)." (1)

May Sage Patanjali bless us with good and strong health, deep scholarship of languages and subjects, and intense devotion at the feet of Lord Nataraja.

Prabodhasudhakara of Adi Sankara

The Ocean of the Nectar of Enlightenment
A Summary
By S. N. Sastri

Introduction

Prabodhasudhakara is one of the lesser-known works of Sri Sankaracharya. It consists of 257 verses divided into 19 chapters. One distinguishing feature of this work is that it recognises the paths of knowledge (jnana) and devotion (bhakti) as equally valid and expressly declares the oneness of Brahman with and without attributes.

What is it that human beings desire most? It would seem that there is no single answer to this question. Desires seem to be as numerous as there are individuals. Some crave for wealth, some for fame, some for power and so on. But is it possible to reduce all these desires to one single desire, of which all these are only different manifestations? The answer of Vedanta is in the affirmative. The one desire that is common to all human beings, nay, all living beings, is: "May I always be happy, may I never have to experience sorrow". Thus everything in this world is desired for the happiness it is expected to bestow, but happiness is desired for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else. Vedanta says that this universal desire happiness is because happiness is our real nature. We suffer misery only because we have not realized our real nature and wrongly think of ourselves as the body, senses or mind. When a person says he is stout or lean or tall or short, etc, he looks upon himself as his body. When he says, "I see", "I hear", "I smell", etc, he identifies himself with his sense organs. When he says, "I think", "I understand", etc., he identifies himself with his mind. All these identifications are wrong and result from ignorance of our real nature.

The highest goal of life according to Advaita Vedanta is the attainment of a state of supreme bliss by the realization of our real nature. This is not a state to be attained in some other world after the end of the present life, as in other schools of Vedanta. On the other hand it is to be attained here, in this world and during this life itself. This is the state known as Jivanmukti or liberation-in-life. This is attained when one realizes that he is not the body, or the senses, or the mind, but the self or Atma, which is identical with Brahman. The Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita expound the means of attaining this state. One essential requisite for this is purity of mind, which means a mind free from cravings for worldly pleasures. This should not be misunderstood as meaning that one has to renounce the world and take sannyasa. What has to be cultivated is an attitude of detachment. One who has cultivated such an

attitude will be able to engage himself in his normal worldly activities, without becoming unduly distressed by adversities or unduly elated by favourable happenings. Only a person who has attained such a state of equanimity of mind will be able to concentrate his mind on the teachings of the Upanishads and give up his wrong identification with the body, senses and mind. When this wrong identification is given up, he remains as what he is in reality, namely, the Atma or self, which is identical with Brahman. Brahman is bliss and so when one realizes his identity with Brahman he enjoys supreme bliss. The first few chapters of the present book deal with the means by which such a detachment can be cultivated. Thereafter the book proceeds to deal with such matters as the nature of the Self, and leads step by step to the ultimate goal.

Chapter-1 - Censure of the physical body

The work commences with a salutation to Krishna, described as the Supreme Lord of the Yadava race, who is none other than the Unborn, Self-effulgent, Supreme Being, who is Pure Existence, Consciousness and Eternal Bliss. Thus the identity of the Personal God with Nirguna Brahman is established at the very outset. The next verse points out that Brahman whom even the Vedas are unable to describe, is certainly not accessible to the words of human beings. Though this is so, He can be attained through the scriptures and by contemplation on, and singing the praises of, Hari. However, spiritual practices, knowledge and devotion are of no avail without the cultivation of intense dispassion. Dispassion, knowledge of the Self and devotion -- these three together constitute the means to liberation. Dispassion is total absence of desire for all objects of enjoyment. The notions of 'I' and 'mine' are the obstacles to the rise of dispassion. The notion of 'I' relates to the body and the notion of 'mine' relates to objects such as wife, son, and possessions. If one ponders deeply over the nature of the body and its relationship with objects, these two notions can be gradually eliminated. The jiva (individual soul) takes a body in accordance with his past karma, and is born as a result of the union of the father and the mother. The jiva is baked by the flames of the digestive fire in the womb of the mother, surrounded by mucus, urine and faecal matter. After birth he undergoes sufferings of various kinds in childhood due to illness and other causes. The jiva takes birth in eighty four lakhs of different species such as insects, birds, animals, human beings and so on. The human body is the highest in the scale of evolution. Even among human beings, birth in a noble family of learned persons, which is conducive to the study and practice of the teachings of the Vedas, is the highest and most to be desired. If, even after attaining such a valuable birth, discrimination between the eternal Self and the perishable non-Self is not acquired, the life is merely wasted. There cannot be a greater loss than this. The next birth may be as an animal, or bird, etc., in which there is absolutely

no possibility of spiritual progress. These creatures cannot even give expression to the suffering undergone by them.

The physical body is a collection of blood, bones, marrow, fat, flesh and the like. It is covered outside by the skin. But for this covering, it would be snatched and eaten by crows. The very sight of the phlegm emitted by the nostrils and the mouth, and the faecal matter from the anus is revolting. If a man sees a bone lying on the road, he would walk away from it in disgust, but he does not realise that his own body is full of similar bones. The body is full of foul-smelling matter from the hair on the head to the tip of the nails. People anoint this body with sandal paste and various cosmetics in order to conceal its defects. Fools praise the body, attributing merits to it. If a wound on the body is not cleaned for three days, worms arise there and a bad smell emanates. The body which till then slept on a beautiful couch is bound with ropes and pieces of wood and thrown into the fire when life departs from it. People worship with joy a king seated on his throne, but when he dies they do not like even to look at his body. Forgetting the Supreme Lord because of whom the impure body is sentient and active, man looks upon his body as himself. Where is the Self which is of the nature of Pure Existence and Consciousness, and where is the body made of flesh, blood and bones! Would any wise man think highly of the impure body?

The object in censuring the physical body in this manner is to generate dispassion in the mind of the spiritual seeker.

Chapter-2 - Censure of the objects of sense

The deluded man goes after sense pleasures which only weaken his body. Justas a house made of mud, which has collapsed because of heavy rain cannot be strengthened with mud, the man cannot regain his strength by indulging more in sense-pleasures. A man is infatuated with his wife even if she is not beautiful and this causes him mental agitation; but if she happens to be beautiful, his unhappiness is even greater because others may look upon her with longing. If the wife is very foolish, or disobedient to her husband, she becomes worse than an enemy.

The Veda says that there is no 'world' for a man without a son. What is the 'world' referred to by this statement? It is certainly not liberation. It cannot also be this world or heaven, because there are other means to attain them. The performance of sacrifices such as 'putrakameshti' are useless because they do not lead to real and permanent happiness. Before a son is born, a man is anxious to get one. When a son is born, the father is full of anxiety about his life. He is also worried whether the son will be intelligent and of good character, or otherwise. If the son hurts the father, mother or other relatives,

he causes further misery to the parents. Even if the son has all virtues, there will be great unhappiness if he is diseased or dies prematurely. If it is said that a son enables his father to attain to a higher world after death, that also does not stand to reason, because each person's future depends on his own actions and merits and not on somebody else. Every person goes through innumerable births, in which he has different fathers, mothers, sons and relatives. Such associations are therefore purely transient, like wayfarers meeting at some place and then dispersing. The sons and other dependants are happy only if they are fed and looked after well, otherwise they become angry. Every one puts in great effort to acquire as much wealth as possible. But if excessive wealth is acquired, there is danger from thieves. Taxes levied by the Government may take away a substantial portion of the wealth. Quarrels also start within the family about the sharing of the wealth. Thus the objects acquired with great effort for the sake of getting happiness lead ultimately only to unhappiness and mental agitation.

(The object of this denunciation of objects of sense is to generate dispassion in the spiritual aspirant. The idea is that one should not get too attached to family, wealth, and possessions).

Chapter-3 - Censure of the mind

The mind, when possessed by the demoness of desire, becomes a devil. It wanders all over, is sometimes happy, sometimes sad, sometimes angry, and so on. It is sometimes virtuous and sometimes wicked. It is pulled in different directions by pride, greed, desire, anger, jealousy and other emotions. One can attain dispassion by giving up desires. The mind will then become calm.

Chapter-4 - Discarding objects of sense

The boat in the form of the human body is dragged here and there by the force of past karma in the ocean of worldly existence which is full of water in the form of sense-objects. This boat has nine openings (the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the organs of excretion and generation). Water in the form of sense-objects enters through these openings and tends to sink the boat. If these openings are kept closed, the jiva, who is the boatman, can reach the other shore with ease. Without controlling the senses, none can cross the ocean of worldly existence.

Some instances where free rein to the senses contributes to spiritual downfall are now given. A man looks with longing at the young wife of another man. This results only in his accumulating sin. A man listens to scandalous tales about another man, who is, however, not in the least affected by it. The only

result is that the man listening to such tales incurs sin. When a person makes false allegations about others, those persons are not affected in the least, but the person who makes such allegations becomes a great sinner.

The pleasure enjoyed for a few moments because of the contact of the senses with an object turns into life-long misery when that object is lost. Therefore the wise man should give up hankering after such fleeting pleasures and seek what is eternal. A man given to sensual pleasures is ultimately carried away by death, just like the fish attracted by apiece of flesh in bait. A frog with half its body in the mouth of a snake goes on devouring flies. Similarly, man who is in the clutches of death runs after sensual pleasures even in old age.

Chapter-5 - Restraint of the mind

If the mind is not allowed to go out towards external objects, but is fixed on the Self, it will become identified with the Self. When the mind is thinking of sense objects it becomes tainted and tamoguna predominates. When the mind withdraws itself from sense objects and attains dispassion towards them, sattvaguna will begin to manifest. (Prakriti, which is the material cause of the whole world is said to be composed of three gunas or modes, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas. The mind is also constituted of the same three gunas. The proportion of these gunas varies from person to person. In the same person the proportion varies from time to time, depending on the activities of the mind, and one guna or other predominates. When sattvaguna predominates, the mind is calm, receptive to knowledge and pure. When rajoguna predominates, the person is actuated by greed and is inclined to engage in action for the fulfillment of his desires, heedless of the consequences. When tamoguna predominates, the person becomes lazy and goes into a torpor). The mind of the ordinary person constantly seeks pleasure through the sense organs. If the desired object is not attained the person thinks that he has lost something very valuable and is very unhappy.

Everyone has to experience the consequences of his actions in this life or in past lives. This is the inexorable law. The only way to prevent the mind from running out in search of sense pleasures is by the cultivation of dispassion.

The happiness experienced in deep sleep is not born of any sense object because at that time there is no contact of the mind with external objects through the sense organs.

Just as a tiger confined to a place surrounded by high walls makes repeated efforts to jump over the walls and, becoming exhausted, lies down panting,

the mind, failing in its efforts to go out on account of the sense organs being restrained, becomes calm. Then it gives up all effort.

The mind gradually gives up all agitation if the breath is controlled through pranayama, if the company of sages is resorted to, if the vasanas are given up, and by the cultivation of devotion to the feet of Hari. The mind and the breath are like two sides of the same coin and so when one is controlled the other also becomes calm.

Chapter-6 - Detachment

A person who has come as a guest for a short period to a house will not be unduly elated or depressed by any good or bad happenings in that house. Similarly, a person should stay in his house like a guest, unaffected by whatever happens in the house. One who is free from the notions of 'I' and 'mine' and who has turned his mind away from sense objects is never affected by anything even if he is staying in his house. For a man who sleeps in a forest at the cool foot of a tree where the ground is covered by sand and thick grass, the trees rich in leaves and fruits, the cool fragrant breeze, the birds which sing sweetly and the rivers become friends. The man who has attained total dispassion, whose mind is tranquil, who is free from desire, and who enjoys whatever comes to him unsolicited, has attained fulfillment herein this life itself.

If an object is lost due to carelessness, great sorrow is experienced. But if the same object is presented to a deserving and respected person, there is great joy for the giver. Similarly, if sense pleasures cease to be available or if they cannot be enjoyed because of old age or other reasons, that becomes the cause of sorrow for a long time. But if they are willingly renounced, there is happiness and ultimately, liberation.

The mind forgets its true abode, the Self, and runs about here and there in the terrible forest of sense objects in search of pleasure. It is tormented by the forest fire in the form of the three kinds of afflictions, namely, those caused by physical and mental ailments (known as adhyatmika), those caused by other creatures (adhibhautika), and those resulting from natural calamities such as floods, earthquakes, etc., (adhidaivika). It is captivated by desires for enjoyment and runs after objects of trifling value. Ultimately it is destroyed by the tiger in the form of sense objects. The mind is compared to a restless deer which roams about in the forest in search of grass and falls prey to a tiger. The never ending desires that keep on rising in the mind bring about the ruin of the human being and stand as obstacles to spiritual progress. Detachment is the virtue that should be cultivated most earnestly by every spiritual aspirant.

Chapter-7 - The Self

Although the knowledge about the Self (Brahman) is contained in the Upanishads, the spiritual aspirant should get it only from a Guru. The knowledge of the Self obtained from a mere study of the Upanishads is indirect, like the knowledge from the mere statement that 'jaggery is sweet', which cannot give one any idea of what jaggery looks like or what is the nature of its sweetness. The knowledge received from a Guru is like the knowledge obtained by looking at the jaggery from a distance, which gives an idea of what jaggery looks like, but not about how it tastes. The knowledge obtained by the aspirant by intuitive perception or realization of the Self is like the delight one gets on actually tasting jaggery. Thus, while the scriptures and the Guru can only point out the way, actual realization of the Self depends on one's own effort.

What is it that enables us to experience taste, smell, form, sound, and touch and everything else? It cannot be the physical body or the sense organs, because these exist even in the dead body, but the dead body does not experience any pain when burnt. It cannot be the vital airs (prana), because, even though the prana is active during sleep, a person remains ignorant of thieves entering the house and stealing things. If it is said that it is the mind that enables us to experience all these, then why is it that the mind does not experience all these simultaneously? It is because the mind is itself dependent on the sense organs. This being so, what is it that enables us to have all these experiences?

Let a brightly burning lamp be placed on the floor in a room that is totally dark. Let the lamp be covered by a pot with five holes on the sides. Let various objects be placed all around the pot. The light from the pot, coming through the holes illumines these objects and makes them visible. The visibility of the objects is not caused by the holes in the pot or the lamp made of earth or any other material, or the oil or the burning wick. It is only the light of the lamp that illumines the objects. Similarly, it is the Self or pure Consciousness within the body that enables us to experience the various objects of sense such as taste, smell, etc.

Chapter-8 - Maya

Verse 95 of Prabodhasudhakara says that the Supreme Self who is nothing but Pure Consciousness saw himself as 'I'. Thus he got the appellation 'I'. That was the origin of difference and multiplicity.

The above verse is based on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Br. Up), 1.4.1, which says-"In the beginning (i.e. before creation), there was nothing but the

Self in the form of a person. He pondered and saw nothing other than himself. He said, "I am he". Therefore he came to be called ‘I' (Aham). Therefore, even today, when a person is addressed, he first says, "It is I", and then only gives his name".

Verse 96 says that the Self existed as (or became divided into) two parts, as husband and wife. Therefore the space (by the side of the male) has always to be filled by a female.

This verse is based on Br. Up. 1.4.3,which says (as commented upon by Sri Sankaracharya) -- "The Self projected a body as big as a man and woman together in embrace. He then divided this body into two and they became husband and wife. Therefore the husband and wife are like the two halves of a split pea. Thus, tilla man gets married the space by his side is vacant. This space has to be filled by a wife". This statement in the Upanishad shows that equal importance is given to the husband and the wife. Moreover, it is implied here that a man becomes complete only when he gets married. This should dispel the totally wrong notion held by some that the Hindu religion frowns upon married life and holds up renunciation as the model for all. The scriptures say that one should normally go through the four ashramas one by one and enter the sannyasa ashrama only at the last stage of life. Of course, a person who has developed total detachment can go straight from brahmacharya to sannyasa, without going through the grahastha and vanaprastha ashramas, but that is the exception and not the general rule.

The Supreme Self created all creatures by its Maya, just as we create various objects in dream. So the universe is only like a dream. Maya, which is the power of the Supreme Self is neither different from nor identical with the Self. It is beginningless and is dependent on the Self which is the only reality. It is made up of the three Gunas, namely, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. It brings forth the universe made up of the movable and the immovable. It is only because of maya that everyone identifies himself with his body-mind complex and consequently experiences joys and sorrows resulting from external factors. When a person has crossed over this maya he realises that he is Brahman and remains as Brahman which is supreme bliss.

The mind is the connecting link between the Self which is pure consciousness and the physical body. The physical body perishes, but the mind continues, taking one physical body after another in numerous births. Death is the separation of the mind, also known as the subtle body, from a particular physical body. Birth is the entry of the subtle body into another physical body. The subtle body perishes only on the realization of Brahman, when avidya or ignorance is destroyed.

Just as the space enclosed in a pot or room is called pot-space or room-space, the Self (or Pure Consciousness) covered by Nescience is known as Jiva or individual soul.

A doubt arises here. How can ignorance cover Brahman which is pure consciousness? Can darkness cover the sun? The answer is: Clouds which are produced by the heat of the sun hide the sun from our view, but the fact that it is daytime is still known. Similarly ignorance hides Brahman from us, but the power of consciousness is not hidden and it is seen in all living beings.

Chapter-9 - Definition of subtle body, etc.

Within the gross body there is the subtle body. Within the latter is the causal body. Within that is the super-causal body. (In other works of Sri Sankara only one causal body is mentioned, but here two are mentioned. The difference between the two is explained subsequently). The gross body (or physical body) has already been explained in chapter1. The subtle body is the aggregate of the five subtle elements, the five vital airs, the five organs of sense and the internal organ (mind). It is what is referred to in the sruti by the statement, "The purusha is of the size of the thumb" (Kathopanishad).

The above definition of the subtle body differs from that found in other works of Sri Sankara. In other works the subtle body is described as the aggregate of (1) the five praanas, (2) the fives subtle organs of perception, (3) the five organs of action, (4) the mind, and (5) the intellect.

The causal body is made up of the mental impressions (vaasanaas) left by past actions.

The super-causal body is avidya, which is the cause of the manifestation of the causal body.

Though there are some differences between the definitions of the subtle body and causal body in the present work and those found in other works, the differences are not very material.

The reflection of pure consciousness in the intellect which is the essence of the subtle body is known as the jiva. This jiva causes the manifestation of the sense of ‘I-ness' in the physical body.

The reflection of the sun in the ocean moves because of the movement of the waves. Similarly the reflection of pure consciousness moves in accordance with the changes in the mind. But just as the sun is not affected by the

movement of its reflection, pure consciousness is not at all affected by the movements of its reflection in the mind.

The light of the sun, when reflected from objects such as a bell-metal vessel, illumines the other objects in the same room. Similarly, the reflection of pure consciousness in the subtle body illumines the objects outside through the sense-organs i.e. the senses experience objects outside because of the consciousness reflected in the subtle body.

Raja Yoga: Royal Road to Realisation

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

What is Yoga?

Every religion is founded on the spiritual realisations of a prophet, or of sages. These founders set certain ideals for their followers, with the hope that they will attain the highest aim of their life by practising those ideals. However, with the passage of time these ideals get diluted due to wrong understanding of the ideal by the followers, or due to their overpowering desires for power and pelf.

When the dilution crosses a limit, the adherents either lose faith, or lose sight of the very purpose of religion. That is when emotionalism, irrationality, and fanaticism enter the religion. To stop this rot, it is essential that people have a science of spirituality, against which their own practices can be judged and set right.

Yoga is that science of spirituality. It is the purifying fire in which the garbage of a religion can be burnt down. Being the exalted art and the practical science of spirituality, it commands a special respect among all other paths to realisation. That is why it is also known as the royal road to realisation, Raja Yoga.

Yoga assumes nothing, accepts nothing that is wild, and tolerates no hocus pocus in its practice. It is not meant for the weak in the body, nor can it be practised by the weak in mind, resolve, or spirit. Even a little practise of it gives one concrete results, and opens higher doors to wisdom. And, what to say of practices, even a mere study of this science is capable of removing doubts and confusion from one's mind.

Derived from the root Yuj, the word 'Yoga' means union. But it is also used in a special sense by the practitioners of different paths of spiritual realisation. To a karma yogi, it signifies the union between an individual and the whole; to a Raja yogi (mystic), it means the union between his lower and the higher Self; to a bhakta, it implies the union between himself and God; and to a jnani, it stands for the non-duality of existence.

Raja Yoga is a fully developed philosophy, and is also a practical manual of spiritual practices, in which the focus is on maximising the use of psycho-physical faculties of a person for the realisation of the highest truth. Yogis

believe that by controlling one's body, and by focussing the mind, a practitioner can attain anything in life, including mukti. The most important of these manuals is Patmnjali's Yoga Sutras.

It is believed that Patanjali compiled the Yoga Sutras around 2nd/ 3rd century BCE. But, like all other Hindu sacred texts, the controversy rages as to its exact date. The practice of yoga was current in India much before Patanjali. References to this are present in the Upanishads, and elaborate discussions on it have been made in the Mahabharata. Patanjali only systematised the philosophy and wrote it down in sutra form. Needless to say, the work is a masterpiece of organising an extremely complex subject into a simple, graded and comprehensible discipline.

Since Raja Yoga deals with the mind, it is also known as Hindu psychology. But unlike the present day psychology, the discussion in Yoga is more thorough, meaningful and with a higher purpose. The analysis and remedy of spiritual issues presented here are non-sectarian in nature. This makes Yoga universally relevant and useful.
One branch of Yoga is called Hatha Yoga, in which emphasis is laid upon postures, purification of the body and nerves, and breath control. This kind of practise leads to a healthy body and long life, but does not lead to liberation. Due to this reason, many refuse to accept it as a valid branch of philosophy.

The Philosophy

The philosophy of yoga is based on the Samkhya philosophy, in which the most important concepts are those of the Purusha (soul), Prakriti (nature), and tattva (evolutes of Prakriti). Purusha is pure consciousness, whereas Prakriti is matter and energy, and is characterised by activity. This makes the character of Purusha and Prakriti the opposite. However, the process of creation continues only because these two come close together. Why and how this union takes place, is a mystery, which can best be speculated, and hence it is treated as irrelevant in yoga. This union between the matter and the spirit is accepted simply as a fact, and focus is laid upon getting out of this union, instead of finding out the reason for it. This approach makes Raja Yoga a practical philosophy.

Prakriti is composed of three gunas (lit. qualities, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) which in turn give birth to elements of the universe and also produces the organs of perception, including the mind. In total there are twenty-four tattvas that belong to the realm of Prakriti: Mind, the ten organs, the five elements, the five tanmatras (from which are born the senses and elements), Cosmic Ego, Cosmic Mind, and the Prakriti Herself. All these manifestations of nature are caused by the evolution of nature, and hence no external agent is required to materialise it.

Prakriti has no intelligence of its own. As long as the Purusha is present in it, it appears as intelligent, which in reality is borrowed intelligence, the way a planet's light is actually the reflected light of the sun. Purusha is pure intelligence, but when it comes in contact with Prakriti, It starts experiencing the universe through the buddhi (intellect), which actually belongs to Prakriti. During perception of any kind by a living being, the senses carry the sensations to its mind, but it is the soul where all different perceptions converge, get unified, and he becomes aware of it. By nature the soul alone is free. People wrongly attribute freedom to the mind, and thus give rise to the false idea of the mind being intelligent.

The Yogi analyses both what is free and what is bound, and realises that the Purusha is free, and is the essence of that knowledge which, coming through the Buddhi, becomes intelligence. He also realises that the mind is bound, and that the goal of spiritual practices is to get out of the clutches of the Prakriti, which implies getting out of the mind's area of influence.

When in contact with Prakriti, Purusha forgets His divine nature, starts behaving like a bound entity, and looks at the nature with awe. When He starts experiencing the glamour of Prakriti and outgrowing it, He slowly starts moving towards that state of finality where the entire Prakriti appears small and insignificant to Him. It is then that the universe, as if, falls off from Purusha because of its nothingness. On the other hand, Prakriti has no purpose of its own, except to free the Purusha from Her clutches. This she does by taking Purusha through the experience of objects created by Her.

With this in the backdrop, Yoga philosophy prescribes that a yogi should train himself to outgrow the experiences offered by the nature to attain self knowledge, which is mukti.

Unlike Vedanta, in which there is one indivisible Atman, Yoga believes in infinite number of souls. According to Yoga philosophy, this is the reason why the liberation of one person does not liberate others.
Yoga philosophy makes only passing references to life after death. Concepts like heaven, hell, god, sin, etc. do not get much importance here. It is a practical philosophy, belonging to here and now, with the precision and clarity of a demonstrable experiment in a laboratory.

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: The Book

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras belong to the sutra form of literature, which is a distinct type of composition based on short aphoristic statements. This form of literature was designed to be very short, as the texts were intended to be memorised by students in some of the formal methods of scriptural study. It is due to the Sutra form of literature that a vast mass of philosophical works was preserved in India.

Each sutra being highly condensed, another literary form arose in which commentaries on the sutras were added to clarify and explain them. The Yoga Sutras also have some famous commentaries, including one by Vyasa, and another by Bhoja, which makes the study of the subject complete.

Patanjali's Raja Yoga not only presents yoga as a thorough and consistent philosophical system, it also clarifies many important concepts, like karma, which are common to all traditions of Indian thought. Every later religious text of India, including Vedanta, was strongly influenced by the Yoga philosophy.

The book has 191 sutras, divided into 4 sections (Pada) as follows:
1. Samadhi Pada (51 sutras): It discusses the various superconscious states that an aspirant attains through meditation.
2. Sadhan Pada (55 sutras): It details the method of spiritual practices, known as Astanga Yoga.
3. Vibhuti Pada (55 sutras): The section deals with the various powers that one acquires during the practise of yoga. However, Patanjali cautions that aspirants must stay away from these, otherwise they won't be able to proceed towards the goal of mukti.
4. Kaivalya Pada (34 sutras): The section explains the state of liberation, and the ways to attain it through meditation.

The importance of mind in Yoga

We are what our thoughts are – Yoga philosophy uses this fundamental fact as its premise on which it builds its philosophy. So, we need to understand what these thoughts are, and how they work.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "...the eyes are only a secondary instrument, not the organ of vision. The organ of vision is in a nerve centre of the brain. The two eyes will not be sufficient. Sometimes a man is asleep with his eyes open. The light is there and the picture is there, but a third thing is necessary--the mind must be joined to the organ. The eye is the external instrument; we need also the brain centre and the agency of the mind. .. The mind takes the impression farther in, and presents it to the determinative faculty--Buddhi--which reacts. Along with this reaction flashes the idea of egoism. Then this mixture of action and reaction is presented to the Purusha, the real Soul, who perceives an object in this mixture.

"The organs (Indriyas), together with the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi), and egoism (Ahamkara), form the group called the Antahkarana (the internal instrument). They are but various processes in the mind-stuff, called Chitta. The waves of thought in the Chitta are called Vrittis (literally "whirlpool"). What is thought? Thought is a force, as is gravitation or repulsion. From the infinite storehouse of force in nature, the instrument called Chitta takes hold of some, absorbs it and sends it out as thought. ...

"So we see that the mind is not intelligent; yet it appears to be intelligent. Why? Because the intelligent soul is behind it. You are the only sentient being; mind is only the instrument through which you catch the external world. Take this book; as a book it does not exist outside, what exists outside is unknown and unknowable. The unknowable furnishes the suggestion that gives a blow to the mind, and the mind gives out the reaction in the form of a book, in the same manner as when a stone is thrown into the water, the water is thrown against it in the form of waves. The real universe is the occasion of the reaction of the mind. A book form, or an elephant form, or a man form, is not outside; all that we know is our mental reaction from the outer suggestion. "Matter is the permanent possibility of sensations," said John Stuart Mill. It is only the suggestion that is outside.

"Take an oyster for example. You know how pearls are made. A parasite gets inside the shell and causes irritation, and the oyster throws a sort of enamelling round it, and this makes the pearl. The universe of experience is our own enamel, so to say, and the real universe is the parasite serving as nucleus. The ordinary man will never understand it, because when he tries to do so, he throws out an enamel, and sees only his own enamel. Now we understand what is meant by these Vrittis. The real man is behind the mind; the mind is the instrument in his hands; it is his intelligence that is percolating through the mind. It is only when you stand behind the mind that it becomes intelligent. When man gives it up, it falls to pieces and is nothing. Thus you understand what is meant by Chitta. It is the mind-stuff, and Vrittis are the waves and ripples rising in it when external causes impinge on it. These Vrittis are our universe." (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol 1. P. 200-2)

Yoga is about restraining the mind from acquiring various forms, which it keeps doing all the time. It is through this restraining, with the help of meditative techniques, that one slowly learns to disassociate himself from everything around him. In the state of samadhi (the highest state of meditation), one becomes completely free from every kind of association and gets liberated from the cycle of birth and death. The resulting impression from samadhi obstructs every other impression of the mind accumulated over the ages. By the restraint of even this last impression (which obstructed all other mental impressions) comes the "seedless" Samadhi which destroys the possibility of any future birth. It is in this state that the spiritual aspirant gets established in his true state of existence (svarup). This is mukti; this is the goal of yoga.

As in Vedanta, Yoga philosophy also accepts that consciousness belongs to Purusha (soul) only. Everything else is the evolute of Prakriti, and hence not self luminous. Since mind also belongs to Prakriti, it is not self-luminous, and so it does not have inherent intelligence. This is the core of Yoga psychology.

The mind gets its reflected intelligence from Purusha, and gets coloured by the impurities born of its contact with the sense objects. The goal of Yoga is to cleanse the mind so that the pure light of intelligence from Purursha dawns upon it and leads it to realisation. That is when the soul becomes free from the snares of Prakriti.

Normally, the mind stays in one of these states -- kshipta, scattering; vikshipta, darkening; vimudha, gathering; niruddha, one-pointed, and ekagra, concentrated. The first state is of activity and manifests in the form of pleasure or of pain. The second one corresponds to dullness which tends to injure others. These two states are predominant in the demons. The third kind of mental state is natural to the demigods and the angels. The gathering form (niruddha) is when the mind struggles to centre itself on one object. This state is commonly found in gods. The last state, the one-pointed (ekagra) form, is when the mind tries to concentrate, and finally the concentrated form results in Samadhi. The samadhi is the state when mind cannot acquire one of its above mentioned five states. The mind is finite and hence can not reach or grasp the knowledge of the Infinite attained in the state of samadhi.

Mind and its forms: The Vrittis

Every functional mind stays in a particular state, characterised by thoughts. The modification that a mind undergoes due to any reason, is called vritti. According to Patanjali, Yoga is the conscious stopping of every vritti of the mind (Su. I. 2).

Whatever the type of mind (kshipta, vikshipta, vimudha, niruddha, ekagra), it belongs to one of the five mental states:
a. Pramana: Right knowledge acquired through direct perception, reasoning, inference, and through sacred texts and words of teachers.
b. Viparyaya: Indiscrimination, which gets born due to a mistaken identity, as when one sees a mirage.
c. Vikalpa: Verbal delusion is about the words which have no corresponding reality. For example, A person reacts when he is called a donkey, although the word has no corresponding reality with the truth.
d. Nidra: The state of sleep and dream.
e. Smriti: Memory. It can come from direct perception, false knowledge, verbal delusion, or sleep.

The goal for a yogi is to get out of all these mental states and stop the vrittis associated with them. This requires great practice and perseverance for a long time. The Yoga Sutras discuss the ways, means and the result of the conscious control of the mind.

Ashtanga Yoga: The Eight Steps

The eight "limbs" or steps prescribed in the Sadhan Pada of the Yoga Sutras are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Of these, the first five are called external aids to Yoga (bahiranga sadhana), and the last three are called internal aids to Yoga (antaranga sadhana).

Yama refers to the five abstentions: Ahimsa: non-violence, Satya: truth in word & thought, Asteya: non-covetousness or non-stealing, Brahmacharya: celibacy, Aparigraha: Non-acceptance of gifts. Patanjali adds that even for any non-spiritual person, these are great ethical values, and should be practised by all.

Niyama refers to the five observances: Shaucha: cleanliness of body and mind, Santosha: satisfaction with what one has, Tapas: austerities, Svadhyaya: Scriptural study and introspection, and Ishvarapranidhana: surrender to (or worship of) God.

Asana: It is training oneself into the correct posture for meditation. One should be able to sit comfortably and firmly for long hours in one posture, and hence that posture which is the easiest for one should alone be chosen.

Pranayama: It is the technique of regulating the breath to conserve the psychic energy, called prana, and helps in concentrating the mind. Pranayama is divided into Rechaka (exhaling), Puraka (inhaling), and Kumbhaka (restraining). One complete cycle of these three is called Pranayama. In one Pranayama one may repeat three Gayatris, or an equivalent number of any sacred mantra. However, breathing is only one of the many ways through which one can attain concentration.

Pratyahara: It is the withdrawal of senses and finally the mind from the external objects. According to yoga, an organ is only the external manifestation of the mind to do a particular work.

Dharana: It is the concentration of the mind upon a physical object, such as a flame of a lamp, or the image of a deity by fixing the mind on the lotus of the heart, or on the centre of the head. The practise of this gives rise to a particular kind of mental waves which are not swallowed up by other kinds of thoughts (vrittis), but by degrees become prominent, while all the others recede and finally disappear.

Dhyana: When the multiplicity of the waves born during dharana gives place to unity, and only one wave is left in the mind, it is called Dhyana. However, in this state the act of meditation and the object of meditation remain distinct and separate.

Samadhi: When all forms are given up by the mind during meditation, and the focus is only on the meaning of the object of meditation, thus becoming one with it, it is called Samadhi. In this state, no distinction remains between the act of meditation, and the object of meditation. The mind now goes beyond the limits of reason, and comes face to face with facts which perception, instinct, reason, or testimonies can never reveal.

Types of Samadhi

If the mind can be fixed on a particular point for twelve seconds it is called a Dharana. Twelve such Dharanas make a Dhyana, and twelve such Dhyanas is a Samadhi. The three together make a samyama.

Samadhi is of two kinds: Samprajnāta Samādhi, and Asamprajnāta Samādhi.

A. Samprajnāta Samadhi: Conscious samadhi. In this type of samadhi, the mind remains concentrated on the object of meditation, and hence the consciousness of the object of meditation persists. In the Samprajnata Samadhi, all the powers of controlling the nature come. However, despite attaining all the powers through this kind of samadhi, a yogi can again fall back to the state of bondage, since this is not the ultimate state.

The resulting vritti from this kind of samadhi suppresses every other vritti of the mind. It then becomes easy to suppress this vritti too, to attain the ultimate knowledge.

This samadhi is again of four kinds:
1. Savitarka: The mind is concentrated upon a gross object of meditation, such as a flame. In the very same meditation, when one struggles to take the elements out of time and space, and think of them as they are, it is called Nirvitarka, without question.
2. Savichāra: The mind is concentrated upon the subtle aspect of the component of that object, called the tanmatras. When in the same meditation one eliminates time and space, and thinks of the fine elements as they are, it is called Nirvichara, without discrimination.
3. Sānandā: The concentration here is upon a still subtler object of meditation, like the senses, or the thinking organ, chitta. When the thinking organ is thought of as bereft of the qualities of activity and dullness, it is then called Sananda, the blissful Samadhi.
4. Sāsmitā: The mind is concentrated upon the ego-substance with which the self is generally identified. When the mind itself is the object of meditation, which now becomes very ripe and concentrated, and all ideas of the gross and fine materials are given up, then it is called Sasmita Samadhi. Persons who attain this state are known as Videha, without a gross body. Those yogis, who belong to this state, and get merged in nature without attaining mukti are called Prakritilayas. Those who do not stop even there, attain mukti.

B. Asamprajnāta Samadhi: This is the Perfect Superconscious state that leads to mukti. In this state the mind and the object of meditation become one, and all mental modifications are checked (niruddha). In the earlier kind of samadhi, the latent impressions (in seed form) may continue, but when Asamprajnata is reached, the Samadhi becomes seedless. There are no more seeds in the mind out of which can be manufactured this plant of life, this ceaseless cycle of birth and death. In this state all old tendencies of restlessness, dullness, and also goodness get destroyed. The good and evil tendencies suppress each other, leaving the Soul in its own glory.

The Process of Knowledge

Every knowledge requires Shabda (sound/any external signal), Artha (meaning), and Jnana (knowledge). The signal coming from the external word is known as shabda. The brain receives the signal and processes it for the use of mind; the process is known as artha. When the mind grasps the meaning of the shabda, it throws out its individualised reaction towards the object from which came the signal. This is jnana. These three are distinct processes, but get mixed up in such a fashion as to stay indistinct to a common man. One perceives only their combined effect, known as external object. But, a yogi who has attained a level of meditation can distinguish the three, and when he applies this power of discrimination to various areas of knowledge, he can attain various powers.

Kriya Yoga: The First steps of Growth

For any practitioner of Yoga, benefit comes in two forms :
1. Attainment of Samadhi, and
2. Reduction and control of pain (both physical and mental).

The cause of pain lies in five pain bearing factors: ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life. Ignorance (of one's true nature) is the cause of the other four. Egoism is caused when the senses meet the sense objects; attachment is towards pleasurable objects, aversion is towards unpleasant things, and clinging to life is something common to all living beings. Thus starting from self-preservation to the primordial ignorance, a person has enough grounds that can give birth to any type of pain.

Yoga teaches how to destroy the root of these pain bearing causes. These are:
a) Tapas -- practice of austerities
b) svadhyaya -- study and repetition of the mantra
c) Surrendering fruits of work to God (Isvara Pranidhāna). These are also the three Niyama, explained earlier.

Karma, Virtue, Sin, and Rebirth

Yoga propounds the concept of karmāshaya (receptacle of works, sum total of samaskaras). Samskaras are the mental tendencies which are left behind after a work is complete. For example, when a person acts out of anger, the samskaras related to anger are left behind in the mind. These samskaras, in turn, produce new actions, just as a seed produces a tree. The karmashaya has its root in the pain-bearing obstructions, as mentioned above. These karma work out in this visible life, or in the unseen future life. The seed, in the form of samskara being there, the fruition comes in the form of species, life, and experience of pleasure and pain.

They bear fruit as pleasure or pain, caused by virtue or vice in this life, and get worked out through different bodies, higher or lower, in the next life. Thus a person engaged in cruel acts may be born as a vicious animal in the next birth to work out his samskaras of cruelty which could not be worked out in this life. The wise man sees through pleasure and pain, and knows that they come to all, and that one follows and melts into the other. So, they try to get out of both pleasure and pain by avoiding misery which is not yet come. With the past karma already worked out, and the present working out, it is only future ones that can be controlled. This is the only way to hasten the process of growth.

Good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in the transformations of the nature of a person, but they act only as breakers of obstacles to his evolution, just as a farmer breaks the obstacles to the course of water in his fields. Once the barrier is broken, the water runs down by its own nature (Su. IV. 3). So, when a wicked person decides to be good and saintly, he only has to break the barriers to let the good actions flow in, which are always in wait to have a free flow. This breaking can be done only by good deeds. The same rule applies to any kind of tendency. In the ultimate state of liberation, the purity and knowledge flows in the mind of their own, since they are the true nature of soul. This means that liberation is not a product of meritorious acts, but is the natural state of the soul.

Desires and karma can work out only in the right environment with the help of right body. This means that the unfulfilled desires and unfinished karma would remain stored up, waiting for the proper environment, and the proper body. This results in rebirth, and also makes the cycle of birth and death continue. To get out of this, one has to destroy the seeds of karma that are stored up which can be done with the help of meditation and the practise of values.

God in Yoga

In the Yoga philosophy, God (Ishwara) is a special soul (Purusha), untouched by misery, actions, their results, and desires. Interestingly, Samkhya philosophy, on which Yoga is based, does not accept the existence of God in any form.

The Isvara (god) of the Yogis is not same as God, the Creator of the universe, as is commonly understood in religion. According to Yoga, the creation is the work of Prakriti, and hence Isvara has nothing to do with Creation. According to them, Isvara is the Soul with unlimited knowledge, and is also the Teacher of teachers. The worldly teachers are all limited, but He is the Teacher of infinite knowledge. His manifesting word is Aum, and one can attain samadhi by repeating the sacred Aum, and by thinking on its meaning. One may also get the same results by meditating on God.

Problems and how to counter them

Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-attaining concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained, are the chief obstructions in the path of yoga. Also, when the practice of yoga has been misdirected, the result is grief, mental distress, tremor of the body, irregular breathing, accompany non-retention of concentration. However, they are not dangerous, and one can take steps to cure them. Incidentally, these also trouble a common man. Yoga looks at the very root of these problems and offers ways to counter them.

According to yoga, there are five sources of pain, which are at the root of every conceivable problem that a common man, and also a yogi face. These are – avidya (ignorance about one's true divine nature), asmita (identification with objects around himself), raga (attachment), dvesha (aversion), and abhinivesha (strong sense of clinging to life).

To counter the pains born of these five, one should practice maitri (friendship with all those who are happy), karuna (compassion to all those in misery), mudita (joyfulness towards all that is good), and upeksha (indifference towards the bad). Whenever the yogi feels disturbed, he should direct these counter feelings towards the objects from where the disturbance is coming. These practices pacify the mind, and make it fit for higher achievements.

Steps of Growth

The growth of a yogi comes in seven stages:
1. The restlessness of the mind to know a thousand things of the world stops. The conviction comes to mind that what was to be known, has been known.

2. The mind goes beyond feeling pain at anything of the universe. Nothing can hurt him any more.
3. One becomes a sarvajna (attians full knowledge).
4. There is a complete drop of the sense of duty towards anything in the world.
5. The mind becomes completely free of any kind of agitation. Like a stone fallen on the ground that can never go up the mountain peak again, the mind becomes permanently restful.
6. A complete control over mind comes, which means that it can be resolved back to its ultimate cause, Prakriti.
7. One finally gets established in one's Self.

Powers that a Yogi gains

Yoga declares that all power of the universe flows from the mind, be it individual, or universal (mahat). A Yoga practitioner can gain any number of powers simply by practising the related disciplines. It may be noted that these powers have actually been seen manifested in great yogis. According to Patnajali, the Siddhis (powers) are attained by birth, chemical means, power of words, mortification, or concentration. He also adds that among all, the mind which has attained to Samadhi, alone is the highest. A person attaining powers through medicines, words of blessings, or mortifications, still has desires, but that man who has attained Samadhi through concentration is free from all desires, and hence superior to all.

Some of the powers that a yogi can attain are:
* All enmities and violence cease in presence of the yogi who is established in Ahimsa (non violence).
* A yogi established in truthfulness, can get for himself or others, anything that he desires; established in non-stealing, one gets all the wealth; when established in continence, one gets unsurpassed energy; established in non-acceptance of gifts, a yogi gets the memory of his previous lives; from contentment comes happiness; by repetition of a mantra comes the realisation of that particular deity.
* All knowledge comes to a yogi who succeeds in attaining samyama (the three--Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi--together). He can even understand the language of animals and birds by distinguishing between Shabda (sound), Artha (meaning), and Jnana (knowledge).
* By applying samyama on the bodily signs of others, a yogi can know the nature of that person's mind.
* A yogi can become unseen if he wishes so, by making samyama on his body.
* By focussing on the strength of an elephant (or any other such animal), a yogi gains that kind of strength. This also explains why one should be careful about the company one keeps.

* Focussing on the sun, the moon, and the pole star one gains the knowledge of the world, the stars, and the celestial motions respectively.
* By focussing on the higher states of mind (sattva), one gets supernatural hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling; By focussing on the throat, one controls hunger; by focussing on the heart, one gets the knowledge of the minds.
* It is easy for a yogi to walk on water, thorns etc. He can move at the speed of the mind, become small, become heavier than a mountain, look exceptionally beautiful, and can get surrounded by light.

Patanjali, however, cautions that these are powers in the worldly state, but are great obstacles to the attainment of the highest samadhi, which brings liberation.

Mukti

When the soul realises that it depends on nothing in the universe, and desires nothing, then It attains Kaivalya (lit. uniqueness, freedom) and perfection. This comes when the intellect (sattva), which usually is a mixture of purity and impurity, has been made as pure as the Purusha itself. It is then that the Sattva reflects only on real purity, and an aspirant realises that he had neither birth nor death, nor need for heaven or earth. He realises that he neither came nor went, it was nature which was moving, and that movement was reflected upon the soul.

Swami Vivekananda explains liberation:
"Nature's task is done, this unselfish task which our sweet nurse, nature, had imposed upon herself. She gently took the self-forgetting soul by the hand, as it were, and showed him all the experiences in the universe, all manifestations, bringing him higher and higher through various bodies, till his lost glory came back, and he remembered his own nature. Then the kind mother went back the same way she came, for others who also have lost their way in the trackless desert of life. And thus is she working, without beginning and without end. And thus through pleasure and pain, through good and evil, the infinite river of souls is flowing into the ocean of perfection, of self-realisation." (Complete Works, Vol. I. 304.)

<u>Reference:</u>
Swami Vivekananda, Raja Yoga.
Bhoja Vritti

Sama Veda - An Introduction

Translation from Tamil by P. R. Kannan

ॐ नमः सामवेदाय

Om Namah Samavedaya
Om, Obeisance to Sama Veda

Compiled with blessings and under instructions and guidance of
Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Jagadguru
Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji
69th Peethadhipathi and
Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Jagadguru
Sri Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji 70th
Peethadhipathi of
Moolamnaya Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

Offered with devotion and humility by
Sri Atma Bodha Tirtha Swamiji (Sri Kumbakonam Swamiji)
Disciple of Pujyasri Kuvalayananda Tirtha Swamiji
(Sri Tambudu Swamiji)

सामवेद मूर्तिः
SAMAVEDA MURTHI

नीलोत्पलदलाभासः सामवेदो हयाननः ।
अक्षमालान्वितो दक्षे वामे कम्बुधरः स्मृतः ॥

Samaveda Murthi is said to be horse-faced, shining like blue lotus and holding Akshamala (rosary of beads) in right hand and conch in left hand.

ॐ नमः सामवेदाय
Om Namah Samavedaya
Om, Obeisance to Sama Veda

सामजालजलाकीर्णं छन्दः कल्लोलसङ्कुलम् ।
तन्त्रग्राहान्वितं वन्दे सामवेदमहार्णवम् ॥

I prostrate to Samaveda, the great ocean with web of Samas as water, chandas (metric systems) as waves and tantras as crocodiles.

Contents

1. DIVISION OF VEDAS IN SRIMAD BHAGAVATHAM

Sastras declare that the main characteristic of Veda is its non-human अपौरुषेयम् (Apourusheyam) authorship. Anything created by humans is Pourusheyam; a thing not created by humans is Apourusheyam. Veda has been the life-breath of Bhagavan eternally from beginningless time from Kalpa to Kalpa. (Kalpa is one day of Brahma).

Rishis 'saw' Veda mantras with their power of Tapas. If they had authored those mantras, would they not have been called Mantrakartas (creator of mantras). But Rishis have been traditionally called Mantradrashtas (seers of mantras). They saw the mantras with their Tapas and Bhagavan's grace. It is said श्रुतिं पश्यन्ति मुनयः - 'Seers see Veda'. In the beginning people possessed

the mighty power of yoga and subtle intellect. Hence everyone studied many 'sakhas' (branches) of Veda. Many rare insights spontaneously occurred to them. With change of yugas and their distinct characteristics, the divine powers of men started to decline in later times. The Tamil poet Nachchinarkkiniyar refers to this decline in the power of the intellect by referring to them as 'Men whose life is short, who suffer from many diseases and whose intellect is puny'.

Srimad Bhagavtham describes the state of people in Kaliyuga.
प्रायेण अल्पायुषः सभ्य कलावस्मिन् युगे जनाः ।
मन्दाः सुमन्दमतयः मन्दभाग्या ह्युपद्रुता : ।। (1:1:10)
"People are generally of short life, puny intellect and frail destiny". Even as Kaliyuga began (some 5114 years ago), there was decline with time of memory, lifespan, health, power of intellect and physical strength.
दुर्भगांश्च जनान् वीक्ष्य मुनिर्दिव्येन चक्षुषा ।
सर्ववर्णाश्रमाणां यद्दध्यौ हितममोघदृक् ।। (1.4.18)
"Sage Veda Vyasa, whose vision is unfailing, saw in his divine perception the (future) unfortunate people and pondered over what is good for people of all varnas." When Bhagavan decided to rescue people somehow with his grace, he motivated his partial Avatara, Krishna Dvaipayana (also known as Badarayana and Veda Vyasa) to divide the endless Vedas into four.

"अनन्ता वै वेदाः"- Vedas are endless. Maharishi Krishna, born in an island, came to be known as Krishna Dvaipayana (Dvipa means island). When he performed Tapas under a Badari (jujube) tree in Badarikasramam, he was called Badarayana. As he divided Vedas into four, he became known as Veda Vyasa (Vyasam is classifying). He was partial Avatara of Bhagavan and hence he had the capacity to absorb all of Vedas, though he was born towards close of Dvaparayuga. As per Bhagavan's command, he protected Vedas, which were in the form of one assemblage of sounds, by dividing them into four main groups and further many Sakhas.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad mentions the following to convey that Veda is the life-breath of Bhagavan.
"अस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्वसितं एतत् यत्
ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्वाङ्गिरस
इतिहासः पुराणं विद्या उपनिषदः श्लोकाः ।।"
Sri Vidyaranya Swamiji, who has written commentary on all four Vedas, has also said at the beginning in his obeisance to Guru, Guru Vandana, "यस्य निश्वसितं वेदाः" - "One, whose life-breath is Vedas". That Bhagavan Vyasa

divided Vedas into four is mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatham and Vishnu Puranam.

Srimad Bhagavatham:

चातुर्होत्रं कर्मशुद्धं प्रजानां वीक्ष्य वैदिकम् ।

व्यदधात् यज्ञसन्तत्यै वेदमेकं चतुर्विधम् ।। १९

"Veda Vyasa divided Veda into four parts in order to expand and spread yagnas among people, as he felt that the 'Chaturhotra' (yagna) karma laid down in Veda purifies the hearts of people." (1:4:19)

ऋग्यजु: सामाथर्वाख्या वेदाश्चत्वार उद्धृता: ।

इतिहासपुराणं च पञ्चमो वेद उच्यते ।।   २०

"Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva were the four Vedas culled by Veda Vyasa. Itihasa and Purana are said to be the fifth Veda." (1:4:20)

तत्रर्ग्वेदधर: पैल: सामगो जैमिनि: कवि: ।

वैशम्पायन एवैको निष्णातो यजुषामुत ।। २१

"Paila was his disciple who was selected for Rig Veda; the wise Jaimini for Sama Veda; Vaisampayana for Yajur Veda." (1:4:21)

अथर्वाङ्गिरसामासीत्सुमन्तुर्दारुणो मुनि: ।

इतिहासपुराणानां पिता मे रोमहर्षण: ।।   २२

"Sumantu Muni, son of Daruna, became proficient in Atharva Veda. Itihasa and Purana fell to the lot of Romaharshana, my father." (1:4:22)

त एत ऋषयो वेदं स्वं स्वं व्यस्यन्ननेकधा ।

शिष्यै: प्रशिष्यैस्तच्छिष्यैर्वेदास्ते शाखिनोऽभवन् ।।   २३

"The above mentioned Rishis subdivided their Veda further into many branches. Vedas developed many branches (Sakhas) thus through the guru-sishya parampara (lineage of the gurus and their disciples). (1:4:23)

त एव वेदा दुर्मेधैर्धार्यन्ते पुरुषैर्यथा ।

एवं चकार भगवान् व्यास: कृपणवत्सल: ।।   २४

"Vyasa, with compassion towards men of declining understanding and memory, divided Vedas thus so that those whose memory is poor, could retain Vedas." (1:4:24)

The above facts are reiterated in the following later verses by Suta Muni to Maharshi Sounaka.

पराशरात् सत्यवत्यामंशांशकलया विभु: ।

अवतीर्णो महाभाग: वेदं चक्रे चतुर्विधम् ।। ४९

"O Fortunate Muni, Bhagavan came down in his partial Avatara as Vyasa, son of Parasara Rishi and Satyavathi and divided Veda into four." (12:6:49)

ऋगथर्वयजुःसाम्नां राशीनुद्धृत्य वर्गशः ।
चतस्रः संहिताश्चके मन्त्रैर्मणिगणा इव ।। ५०

"Like grouping of gems of same type, he separated Rig, Atharva, Yajur and Sama Vedas and made them into four Samhitas." (12:6:50)

तासां स चतुरः शिष्यानुपाहूय महामतिः ।
एकैकां संहितां ब्रह्मन्नेकैकस्मै ददौ विभुः ।।५१

"The mighty Vyasa called four disciples and handed over one Samhita each to them." (12:6:51)

पैलाय संहितामाद्यां बह्वृचाख्यामुवाच ह ।
वैशंम्पायनसंज्ञाय निगदाख्यं यजुर्गणम् ।। ५२

"He taught the first Samhita called 'Bahvrich' or 'Rik' to Paila and 'Nigada' or 'Yajur' Samhita to Vaisampayana." (12:6:52).

साम्नां जैमिनये प्राह तथा छन्दोगसंहिताम् ।
अथर्वाङ्गिरसीं नाम स्वशिष्याय सुमन्तवे ।। ५३

"He taught the 'Chandoga' or 'Sama' Samhita to Jaimini and "Atharva Angirasa" Samhita to his disciple Sumantu." (12:6:53)

"Samhita" can be interpreted as selected and cumulated mantras.
In the context of the greatness and details of Samaveda including its Sakhas, Braahmanas and Upanishads, let us now look at the following verses from Srimad Bhagavatham.

जैमिनेः सामगस्यासीत् सुमन्तुस्तनयो मुनिः।
सुन्वांस्तु तत्सुतस्ताभ्यामेकैकां प्राह संहिताम् ।। ७५

"Jaimini, who received Sama Veda from Vyasa, had a son called Sumanthu Muni, whose own son was Sunvan. Jaimini taught them a Samhita each." (12:6:75)

सुकर्मा चापि तच्छिष्यः सामवेदतरोर्महान् ।
सहस्रसंहिताभेदं चक्रे साम्नां ततो द्विजः ।। ७६

"Sukarma, a disciple of Jaimini, made a thousand different Samhitas of Samaveda, like branches of a mighty tree." (12:6:76)

हिरण्यनाभः कौसल्यः पौष्यञ्जिश्च सुकर्मणः ।
शिष्यौ जगृहतुश्चान्य आवन्त्यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ।। ७७

"Sukarma's disciples Hiranyanabha of Kosaladesa, Poushyanji and Aavantya, the best among knowers of Brahman received the above Sakhas." (12:6:77)

उदीच्याः सामगाः शिष्या आसन् पञ्चशतानि वै ।
पौष्यञ्ज्यावन्त्ययोश्चापि तांश्च प्राच्यान् प्रचक्षते ।। ७८

"Poshyanji and Aavantya had five hundred disciples each from the north. They are also called Samavedis of the east. They studied a Samhita each." (12:6:78)

लौगाक्षिर्माङ्गलिः कुल्यः कुसीदः कुक्षिरेवच ।

पौष्यञ्जिशिष्या जगृहुः संहितास्ते शतं शतम् ।। ७९

"Poushyanji had more disciples- Lougakshi, Maangali, Kulya, Kusida and Kukshi. They also studied a hundred Samhitas each." (12:6:79)

कृतो हिरण्यनाभस्य चतुर्विंशतिसंहिताः ।

शिष्य ऊचे स्वशिष्येभ्यः शेषा आवन्त्य आत्मवान् ।। ८०

"Krita, the disciple of Hiranyanabha, taught twentyfour Samhitas to his own disciples. Aavantya, the self-controlled Rishi, taught the remaining Samhitas to his own disciples. Samaveda was expanded in this manner." (12:6:80)

2. DIVISION OF VEDAS IN SRI VISHNU PURANAM

Sri Vishnu Puranam by Parasara Maharshi

The above rare secrets relating to Veda can also be noted in Sri Vishnu Puranam.

Sri Vishnu Puranam, 3rd Section, 4th Chapter:

ब्रह्मणा चोदितो व्यासो वेदान्व्यस्तुं प्रचक्रमे ।

अथ शिष्यान्प्रजग्राह चतुरो वेदपारगान् ।। ७

"Prodded by Brahma, Vyasa commenced dividing Vedas and selected four disciples to receive the instruction."

ऋग्वेदपाठकं पैलं जग्राह स माहामुनिः ।

वैशम्पायननामानं यजुर्वेदस्य चागहीत् ।। ८

"That great sage handed over Rigveda to Paila and Yajurveda to the disciple called Vaisampayana."

जैमिनिं सामवेदस्य तथैवाथर्ववेदवित् ।

सुमन्तुस्तस्य शिष्योऽभूद्वेदव्यासस्य धीमतः ।। ९

"Jaimini was the disciple chosen by the wise Veda Vyasa for Samaveda and Sumantu for Atharvaveda."

रोमहर्षणनामानं महाबुद्धिं महामुनिः ।

सुतं जग्राह शिष्यं स इतिहासपुराणयोः ।। १०

"The sage handed over Itihasas and Puranas to his disciple Romaharshana of great intelligence."

एक आसीद्यजुर्वेदस्तं चतुर्धा व्यकल्पयत् ।

चातुर्होत्रमभूत्तस्मिंस्तेन यज्ञमथाकरोत् ।। ११

“He created four sections of one mass of what was known as Yajurveda. He ordained four sections of rituals in the course of performance of yagna.”

आध्वर्यवं यजुर्भिस्तु ऋग्भिर्होत्रं तथा मुनिः ।

औद्गात्रं सामभिश्चके ब्रह्मत्वं चाप्यथर्वभिः ॥ १२

“The sage got the performance of Adhvaryu part done with Yajur mantras; Hotra part with Rik mantras; Audgatram (part played by Udgatha) with Sama mantras; Brahma part with Atharva mantras.”

ततस्स ऋच उद्धृत्य ऋग्वेदं कृतवान्मुनिः ।

यजुंषि च यजुर्वेदं सामवेदं च सामभिः ॥ १३

“He collected the Rik mantras into Rigveda; Yajur mantras into Yajurveda; Sama mantras into Samaveda.”

राज्ञां चाथर्ववेदेन सर्वकर्माणि च प्रभुः ।

कारयमास मैत्रेय ब्रह्मत्वं च यथास्थितिः ॥ १४

“O Maitreya, he got all karmas of kings done with Atharvaveda through Brahma.”

Sri Vishnu Puranam, 3rd Section, 6th Chapter:
In this chapter Sri Parasara Maharshi enlightened Maitreya on the details of Sakhas.

सामवेदतरोश्शाखा व्यासशिष्यस्य जैमिनिः ।

क्रमेण येन मैत्रेय बिभेद श्रृणु तन्मम ॥ १

‘O Maitreya, Listen from me how the Sakhas (branches) of the tree of Samaveda came into being at the hands of Jaimini, disciple of Vyasa.”

सुमन्तुस्तस्य पुत्रोऽभूत्सुकर्मास्याप्यभूत्सुतः ।

अधीतवन्तौ चैकैकां संहितां तौ महामती ॥ २

“Jaimini’s son was Sumanthu and Sukarma was Sumanthu’s son. These two greatly intelligent disciples studied one Samhita each (of Samaveda from Jaimini).”

सहस्रसंहिताभेदं सुकर्मा तत्सुतस्ततः ।

चकार तं च तच्छिष्यौ जगृहाते महाव्रतौ॥३

“Sukarma, the son of Sumanthu, divided Samaveda further into a thousand Samhitas, which were received by his two highly disciplined disciples.”

हिरण्यनाभः कौसल्यः पौष्पिञ्जश्च द्विजोत्तम ।

उदीच्यास्सामगाः शिष्यास्तस्य पञ्चशतं स्मृताः ॥ ४

“O best among brahmanas, those two disciples were Hiranyanabha of Kosaladesa and Poushpinja. Five hundred disciples of the latter are said to be ‘Udichya Samagas’ (the northern Samavedis).”

हिरण्यनाभात्तावत्यस्संहिता यैर्द्विजोत्तमैः ।
गृहीतास्तेऽपि चोच्यन्ते पण्डितैः प्राच्यसामगा ।। ५

"The best brahmanas, who received Samhita instruction from Hiranyanabha, are known by the scholars as 'Praachya Samagas' (the eastern Samavedis)."

लोकाक्षिर्नौधमिश्चैव कक्षीवांन्लाङ्गलिस्तथा ।
पौष्पिभूञ्जिशिष्यास्तद्भेदैस्संहिता बहुलीकृताः ।। ६

"The disciples of Poushpinja, viz. Lokakshi, Noudhami, Kaksheevan and Laangali, further expanded the various sections of Samaveda."

हिरण्यनाभशिष्यस्तु चतुर्विंशतिसंहिताः ।
प्रोवाच कृतिनामासौ शिष्येभ्यश्च महामुनिः ।। ७

"The disciple of Hiranyanabha, known as Kriti, who was a great sage, taught twentyfour Samhitas to his disciples."

तैश्चापि सामवेदोऽसौ शाखाभिर्बहुलीकृतः ।।

"This Samaveda was further expanded into several Sakhas by them also."

The congruence of the verses of Srimad Bhagavatham and Sri Vishnu Puranam may be noted.

3. BRANCHES (SAKHAS) OF SAMAVEDA

Samaveda grew nearly into a thousand Sakhas as it developed in the tradition of the lineage of disciples, as seen from the verses of the Puranas.

महाभाष्यकारः पस्पशान्हिके
एकशतमध्वर्युशाखाः सहस्रवर्त्मा सामवेदः
एकविंशतिधा बाह्वृच्यम् नवधाऽथर्वणो वेदः इति ।

"Mahabhashyakara (Patanjali) also says in his 'Paspasaanhi Kaadikaranam' that Samaveda has a thousand branches. He adds that Yajurveda has a hundred Sakhas, Rigveda, twentyone and Atharvaveda, nine."

Similarly Sri Mahidasa in his work 'Charanavyuham', which explains Vedas in detail, says in the 3rd Khanda:

सामवेदस्य किल सहस्रभेदा भवन्ति ।।
एष्वनध्यायेष्वधीयाना स्ते शतक्रतुवज्रेणाभिहताः
शेषान्व्याख्यास्यामः

"Samaveda had a thousand Sakhas. Of them, some were destroyed by Indra's Vajrayudha, as they were studied in 'Anadhyayana' period (period in which study of Vedas is prohibited in Sastras). We shall now explain the remaining Sakhas." He lists the following Sakhas in groups of seven and nine as available:

1. Raanaayaniyam	1. Raanaayaniyam
2. Chatyamugram	2. Chatyayaniyam
3. Kaaleyam	3. Chatyamugram
4. Mahakaaleyam	4. Kalvalam
5. Laangalaayanam	5. Mahakalvalam
6. Saardulam	6. Laangalam
7. Kouthumam	7. Kouthamiyam
	8. Kouthumiyam
	9. Jaiminiyam

At the present time there are only three Sakhas, which are being practised and taught in our country. They are Kouthuma, Raanaayaniya and Jaiminiya (or Talavkaara) Sakhas. In Tamilnadu it is only Kouthuma Sakha that is widely prevalent.

The following thirteen Rishis have been listed as Acharya Mahapurushas of this Sakha in the book 'Charanavyuha Parisishtam':

1. Raanayani
2. Saatyamugri
3. Durvasa
4. Baaguri
5. Gourundi
6. Goulgulavi
7. Oupamanyava
8. Taaraala
9. Gaargisaavarni
10. Vaarshaganya
11. Kuthumi
12. Saalihotra
13. Jaimini

4. SAMAVEDA IN THE HYMNS OF THE FOUR NAAYANMAARS

Glorious references to Samaveda and Lord Siva's special love for that Veda are to be found in many hymns sung by the four great Naayanmaars. A brief list of such hymns is as under.

Kshetra	Pan (or raga)	Serial number
Tiruvalivalam	Palandakkaraga	537, 538
Tiruvaalgoliputhur	Piyandaigaandhara	1017
Tiruvidaimarudur	Gaandhaara	601, 1002, 71, 202
Tirubrahmapuram	Panchama	594, 646, 270, 317, 447, 625, 666, 749, 33, 502, 629
Tirunallaru	Takkesi	688

5. GREATNESS OF SAMAVEDA IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE

The greatness of Samaveda is brought out extensively in all Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas and Sangitha Sastras. Let us look at some of these references.

Rig Veda

आङ्गूष्यं शवसानाय साम
अङ्गिरसां सामभि: स्तूयमाना:
ऋतुथा शकुन्तय:
उभेवाचौ वदतिसामगा इव
गायत्रं च त्रैष्टुभं चानुराजति ।।
उद्गातेव शकुने साम गायसि
ब्रह्मपुत्र इव सवनेषु शंससि
यो जागार तमृच: कामयन्ते
यो जागार तमु सामानि यन्ति
यूयमृषिमवथ सामविप्रम्
अर्चन्त एके महि साम मन्वत
तेन सूर्य मरोचयन्
प्रस्तोषदुपगासिषच्छ्रवत्
सामगीयमानम् ।
एतोन्विन्द्रं स्तवाम शुद्धं शुद्धेन साम्ना
इन्द्राय साम गायत विप्रायबृहते बृहते बृहत् ।।
साम कृण्वन्त्सामन्यो विपश्चित्
एन्द्रो बर्हि: सीदतु पिन्वताळा
बृहस्पति: सामभिर्ऋक्को अर्चतु ।
तमेव ऋषिं तमु बह्माणमाहु:
यज्ञन्यं सामगामुक्थशासम् ।।
उभे यत् तोके तनये दधाना
ऋतस्य सामन् रणयन्त देवा:
गायत्रेणप्रति मिमीते अर्कमर्केण
साम त्रैष्टुभेन वाकम् ।।
गायत् साम नभन्यंर यथा
वेरर्चाम तत् वावृधानं स्ववर्त् ।
आ देवानामोहते विब्र्यो हृदि
बृहस्पते नपर: साम्नोविदु: ।।

निसामनामिषिरामिन्द्र भूमिं
मदीमपारां सदने ससत्थ ॥
इमेमयूखा उप सेदुरू सद: सामानिचकुस्तसरण्योतवे
तं सामानु प्रावर्तत समितो नाव्याहितम् ॥

Krishna Yajurveda

रथन्तरमभिगायते गार्हपत्य आधीयमाने ।
राथन्तरो वा अयं लोक: ॥
अस्मिन्नेवैनल्लाँके प्रतिष्ठितमाधत्ते ।
वामदेव्यमभिगायत उधियमाणे
अन्तरिक्षं वै वामदेव्यम् ।
अन्तरिक्ष एवैनं प्रतिष्ठितमाधत्ते ।
अथो शान्तिर्वै वामदेव्यम् ।
सोऽश्वो वारो भूत्वा पराङैत् ।
तं वारवन्तीयेनावारयत ।
तद्वारवन्तीयस्य वारवन्तीयत्वम् ।
यानि देवराजानाँ सामानि ।
तैरमुष्मिल्लाँकेऋध्नोति
यानिमनुष्यराजानाॅ सामानि ॥
अयज्ञो वा एष: । योऽसामा ॥
चतुरुन्नयति। चतुरक्षँरथन्तरम् ॥
रथन्तरस्यैष वर्ण: । उपरीव हरति ।
अन्तरिक्षं वामदेव्यम् । वामदेव्यस्यैष वर्ण: ।
द्विर्जुहोति ।
सुपर्णोऽसि गरुत्मान् त्रिवृत्ते शिरो गायत्रम् ।
चसुस्तोम आत्मा साम ते तनूर्वामदेव्यं बृहत् ।
रथन्तरे पक्षौ यज्ञायज्ञियं पुच्छं ।
छन्दांसि अङ्गानि। फ्तै सं. 4.42
साम्ना प्रस्तोताऽन्ववैति सामवैरक्षो हा । तै सं. 6.6.9
उद्गातृभ्यो हरन्ति सामदेवत्यो वै सौम्य: ॥ तै सं. 6.6.29
देवलोको वै साम । तै सं. 7.5.6.

सर्वन्तेजस्सामरूप्यंहशश्वत् ।	तै ता.का. 3.50
सामवेदो ब्राह्मणानां प्रसूतिः	तै ता.का. 3.50
आग्नयो वै त्रयी विद्या देवयानः पन्था	
गार्हपत्य ऋन्नपृथिवि रथन्तरमन्वाहार्यपचनं	
यजुरन्तरिक्षं वामदेव्यमाहवनीयं साम	
सुवर्गो लोको बृहत् ॥	तै ता.का. 1.100

Atharva Veda

बृहतः परि सामानि	8.9.4
सामानि यस्य लोमानि	
यजुर्हृदयं उच्यते	9.6.2
ब्रह्मणा परिगृहीता साम्ना पर्यूढा	11.3.15
ऋचः सामानि छन्दांसि पुराणं	
यजुषा सह ।	
उच्छिष्टाज्जज्ञिरे सर्वे दिविदेवा दिविश्रितः	11.7.24
ऋचां च वै स साम्नां च यजुषां च	
बह्मणश्च प्रियं धाम भवति यएवं वेद	15.6.9

Sukla Yajurveda Kaanva Samhita

शुक्लयजुर्वेदकाण्वसंहिता ॥	
ऋचं वाचम्प्रपद्ये मनो यजुः प्रपद्ये	
साम प्राणम्प्रपद्ये चक्षुः श्रोत्रंम्प्रपद्ये....	36.1.1

Itihasas

In Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam the method of chanting the verses is mentioned as being in accordance with Samaveda. It is stated in Bala Kandam in 4th Sarga:

काव्यं रामायणं कृत्स्नं सीतायाश्चरितं महत्	7
पाठ्ये गेये च मधुरं प्रमाणैस्त्रिभिरन्वितम् ।	
जातिभिः सप्तभिर्बद्धं तन्त्रीलयसमन्वितम् ॥	8
तौ तु गान्धर्वतत्वज्ञौ मूर्च्छनास्थानकोविदौ ।	
भ्रातरौ स्वरसंपन्नौ गन्धर्वाविव रूपिणौ ॥	10

“Those two brothers Lava and Kusa, endowed with pleasing voice, whose appearance was like Gandharvas’, knew the principles of Gaandharva Veda (Music) and were experts in the technique of producing sound from various sources (heart, throat and head) and stopping the sound as required while singing. While chanting and singing the entire Ramayanam epic, including the great story of Sita, they stuck to the the three Pramanas (speeds- fast, middle and slow) and the seven basic svaras (Shadja etc.) as if to the hum of strings in the Veena to proper svara and tala.”
Further in Kishkindha Kandam, Rama spoke to Lakshmana in praise of Hanuman:

नानृग्वेदविनीतस्य नायजुर्वेदधारिणः ।

नासामवेदविदुषः शक्यमेवं प्रभाषितुम् ।।

“It is not possible for one, who has not mastered Rig Veda, Yajur Veda and Sama Veda, to speak so well in this manner.” (3:29)

In Sri Mahabharatam in Adi Parva it is stated: सामवेदश्च वेदानाम्

“Of all Vedas, Sama Veda is the most important.” (14:3:17)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Srimad Bhagavad Gita वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि (10.22)

“I am Sama Veda among Vedas.” (10:22)

In Sri Vishnu Sahasranamam, while commenting on त्रिसामा सामगः साम

Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada says:

देवव्रत समाख्यातैः त्रिभिः सामभिः सामगैः स्तुत इति त्रिसामा ।।

“Sri Mahavishnu, who is Parameswara, is praised by those, who sing Samaveda, through three Samas called Devavrata.” Devavrata refers to three Samas अधिप ताइ found in Aaranya Ganam in Vrataparva in Samaveda.

There are Rishis, Chandas and Devata for the three Samas as under:

द्वयोः रुद्र ऋषिः अनुष्टप् छन्दः रुद्रो देवता ।।

विश्वेदेव ऋषिः अनुष्टप् छन्द, इन्द्र रुद्रोदेवता

These three Samas are sung in Sri Rudram in Samaveda, as mentioned in Samavidhana Braahmanam as under:

आवोराजा तद्वोवर्ग आज्यदोहानि

देवव्रतानि चैषा रैद्रिनामसंहितैतां प्रयुञ्जन् रूद्रम् प्रीणाति ।।

Raghuvamsam

Kalidasa mentions in Raghuvamsam, 16th Sarga, 3rd verse that elephants appeared from Samaveda.

चतुर्भुजांशप्रभवः स तेषां दानप्रवृत्तेरनुपारतानाम् ।

सुरद्विपानामिव सामयोनिर्भिन्नोऽष्टधा विप्रससार वंशः ।।

“The lineage of Rama, the aspect of Mahavishnu, which never deviated from the path of charity, expanded with eightfold progeny, just as the heavenly elephants, which never refrained from exuding the rut juice, were born of Samaveda.”

Sri Vishnu Puranam mentions the names of the eight children born of the Sri Rama and his brothers.

अतिदुष्टसंहारिणो रामस्य कुशलवौ द्वौ पुत्रौ, लक्ष्मणस्याङ्गदचन्द्रकेतू, तक्षपुष्कलौ भरतस्य सुबाहुशूरसेनौ शत्रुघ्नस्य श्रीविष्णुपुराणम् 4.104

Sri Rama’s children	Lava and kusa
Sri Lakshmana’s children	Angada and Chandraketu
Sri Bharata’s children	Daksha and Pushkala
Sri Satrughna’s children	Subahu and Surasena

While explaining the term सामयोनि:, Sri Mallinatha quotes from Sri Balakaapyar’s Gajasastram.

सूर्यस्याण्डकपालेद्वे सामनीय प्रजापति:
हस्ताभ्यां परिगृह्याथ सप्तसामान्यगायत ।।
गायतो ब्रह्मणस्तस्मात्समुत्पेतुर्मतङ्गजा:

“Brahma, while bringing together the two sections of Surya, which were like a bowl, sang seven Sama ganas. From those ganas of Brahma, the eight elephants at the eight quarters appeared.” The eight elephants are: 1. Airavata, 2. Pundarika, 3. Vamana, 4. Kumuda, 5. Anjana, 6. Pushpadanta, 7. Saarvabhouma and 8. Supratika.
Kalidasa says that like these eight elephants which were born of Samaveda, eight children were born of Sri Rama and his brothers. That Gajachikitsa was taught by Sri Balakaapyar to his disciple Lomapada is mentioned in Agni Puranam in chapter 277.

Sampradaya (Classical) Music

Sri Tyagabrahmam, one of the Trinity of Carnatic classical music, sings in his kirtana ‘Sobillu saptaswara’ set to Jaganmohini raga, in the charanam
‘Daruk Samadulalao
Vara Gayatri hridayamura
Sira Busira Manasamuna’.
Similarly in his kriti ‘Ragatanumanisam Sankaram’ set to Siddharanjani raga, in the Anupallavi, he sings ‘Modakara Nigamottama Samaveda saram’.
Tiruppandurutti Sri Narayana Tirtha also in his ‘Sri Krishnalila Tarangini’, in the kirtana जयजय स्वामिन् जयजय ‘Jayajaya Swamin Jayajaya’ dedicated to Mahaganapati, set to Mohana raga in Adi tala, sings:

लम्बोदर धीर लावण्यसार

कम्बुसुधानिधि कर्पूरगौर
साम्बसदाशिव सत्कृति चतुर
सामवेदगीत सकलाधार
Here he mentions 'Samavedagita Sakaladhara'.
Similarly he sings in the kirtana श्रितमुनिजन मण्डल पावन 'Sritamunijana mandala pavana' dedicated to Sri Garuda, set to Mukhari raga and Ata tala:
अशुभं तिमिर चण्डभस्कर
सामविशदं घोष पक्षभासुर
Here he mentions 'Samavisadam' .

Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Sri Syama Sastrigal also in their kirtanas are happy to refer to 'Samaveda gita'. Sri Syama Sastrigal refers to Sri Minakshi as 'Samagana Vinodini'.
Similarly Alwars, Naayanmaars and many Siddhapurushas are seen to sing in praise of Bhagavan in association with Samaveda.
Sri Appar Swamigal, devotee of Paramasiva, while singing in praise of Sri Netrarpaneswara (Sri Vizhinathar) of Tiruvizhimazhalai in Thanjavur district, says: 'sandoha Samam odum Tiruvizhimazhalaiyane' and thus refers to Parameswara as singer of Samaveda.
Naayanmaars sing in praise of Samaveda in many kshetras: 'Gitam kettan Kudamookkile'.
Alwars sing in praise of Bhagavan Vishnu saying 'Samaveda gitanaya Chakrapani yallaye'.

Sri Lalita Sahasranamam

One of the names for Archana in Sri Lalita Sahasranamam is सामगान प्रियायै नमः. Sri Siva Ashtottaram has a name सामप्रियाय नमः . We can note in many places the affinity of all Devatas with Samaveda.

Further one can see the greatness of Samaveda in the works:
'Vedagoshti Vicharam' and 'Samaswara Vimarsam by Mamahopadhyaya Brahmasri Mannargudi Raju Sastrigal of the lineage of Srimad Appayya Dikshitar;
'Samaveda Svaramatradi Tatvavilasam' by Mahamahopadhyaya Tiruvisanallur Brahmasri Ramasubba Sastrigal.

Sri Skaanda Puranam contains Sri Sivashtottaram, for which Sri Nilakantha Dikshitar has written a commentary called 'Sivatatvarahasyam'. The 42nd name in that Stotram is सामप्रियः. The commentary for this name has been given as

सामगीतिविशेष: तत्प्रधानत्वात् वेदोऽपि साम, तत्प्रिय इत्यर्थ: ॥
सामानि यो वेद स वेद सर्वम् इति श्रुतिसिद्धमहिम्नि सामवेदे
प्रीत्यौचित्यात् ॥

6. CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMAVEDA (SAMA SVARUPA)

सामस्वरूपनिर्णय:

'Sama' means making the mind full of peace and happiness. Guidelines on statesmanship stipulate 'Sama, Dana, Bheda, Danda', of which the first means, Sama means making friends even with enemy through love.
Samaveda renders the Devatas and Paramatma favourable to us. Through Samaveda all Devatas are pleased.
In yagnas the grace of Devatas is obtained through not only oblations (Ahutis), but also the Samaganam rendered by 'Udgatha'.
Bhagavan blessed in the form of Samaganam many mantras of eulogy from Rigveda. The root of music with seven Svaras is Samaveda. Sastras convey that Maharishis listened to these ganas with their divine ears and sang them.
In Somayagnas, where the juice of Somalata is offered in oblation, Samagana is very important.

Svara स्वर (note in musical scale) added to Rik ऋक् mantras is 'Sama'. Vaidika Prakriya analyses the word 'Sama' as 'Sa' meaning Rik and 'Ama' meaning svara. Rik or svara in isolation does not constitute Sama. The union of the two alone is Sama.
This is conveyed in Chandogya Upanishad as:

ऋच्यधूढं साम, तस्मात् ऋच्यध्यूढं साम गीयते (2:1:6:1)

Sri Sankaracharya in his commentary preaches:

ऋचीव साम। तस्मात् अत एव कारणात् ऋच्यध्यूढमेव साम गीयते इदानीमपि सामगै:

Samagana is based thus on Rik.

Maharishi Jaimini says: गीतिषु सामख्या (2:1:3:6)

Chandogya Upanishad says:

का साम्नो गति: इति? स्वर इति होवाच (1:8:4)

Hence the union of Rik and svara is Sama. This is also conveyed in Brihadaranyakopanishad: तस्य हैतस्य साम्नो य: स्वं वेद
भवति हास्य स्वम् तस्य स्वर एव स्वम् (1.3.25)

In music also, the two entities 'Sahitya' and 'Svara' are distinct and their union alone constitutes music.

7. ANALYSIS OF SAMA SVARA

स्वरविमर्शः

Svara alone is the living force of Veda. With variations of intonation in svara, the meaning of the sentence changes.
Naradiya Siksha highlights the importance of svara:

साम यजुरङ्गानि ये यज्ञेषु प्रयुञ्जते ।

अविजानादि शास्त्राणां तेषां भवति विस्वरः । (1:1:4)

Mahabhashya says:

मन्त्रो हीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह

It is only by chanting Veda vakyas with proper svara that desired fruit will be obtained. Even if there be slight change in svara, fruit will be opposite.

Music गानं is of two kinds- वैदिकं Vaidika and लौकिकं Loukika. Vaidika Gana (Sama) is called Maargi and Loukika Gana is referred as Desi. Sri Saarngadeva in his work, Sangita Ratnakara says that Vaidika Gana is the basis of Loukika Gana.

सामवेदोदितं गीतं सञ्जग्राह पितामहः (1:1:25)

Both Vaidika and Loukika Ganas have seven svaras.
Naradiya Siksha says:

सप्तस्वरास्त्रयो ग्रामाः मूर्च्छनास्त्वेकविंशातिः

ताना एकोनपञ्चाशदित्येतत् स्वरमण्डलम् (1:2:4)

However there is difference in the pattern of svaras.
Vaidika Gana - Ma, Ga, Ri, Sa, Da, Ni, Pa
Loukika Gana - Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni
We understand that there are only seven svaras in western music also.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do	Re	Mi	Fa	So	La	Ti

Samagana is form of Bhagavan. Loukika gana is a path of devotion to attain Bhagavan. When Bhagavan is pleased with Loukika gana and blesses the devotee, He will certainly bless in the case of devotee singing Sama gana. This is emphasised in Suta Samhita as under by saying:

लौकिकेष्वपि गानेषु प्रसादं कुरुते शिवः ।

किं पुनः वैदिके गाने ततो गानं समाश्रयेत् ॥

Sri Yagnavalkya Maharishi also says:

गीतिनो यदि योगेन न गच्छेत् परमं पदम् ।

रुद्रस्यानुचरो भूत्वा तेनैव सह मोदते ॥ "If the singer (of Samagana) does not attain the Supreme state by chance, he will become an attendant of Siva and enjoy along with Him."

Seven Svaras from Five Faces

Sri Tygabrahmam, while referring to the places of origin of the seven svaras in his kriti 'Nada Tanumanisam' says that from the five faces of Parameswara, viz. Sadyojatham, Vamadevam, Aghoram, Tatpurusham and Isanam, the seven svaras Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da and Ni were born. He sings:

'Sadyojatadi Panchavaktraja
Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Da Ni Vara Sapthasvara'.

How can seven svaras originate from five faces? This was the question put to many Vidvans of music by Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Sri Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal, the 68th Peethadhipathi of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, also known by the appellation of Sri Mahaswamigal. All Vidvans prayed to Sri Maha Periyaval to explain the answer himself. Sri Mahaperiyaval explained:

Of the seven svaras, Shadjam and Panchamam were born of navel and heart respectively. We can note that in the Anupallavi of the kirtana 'Sovillu', Sri Tyagabrahmam mentions 'Naabhi hrit kantha rasara'. As Shadjam and Panchamam are respectively parts of Sakthi and Siva, these two svaras are permanent (Achalam). The remaining five svaras, viz. Rishabham, Gandharam, Madhyamam, Daivatam and Nishadam, possess variation (chalanam). These are indeed born of the five faces of Sri Parameswara-Sadyojata etc.

The seven svaras of Samaveda form the basis of classical music structure. The seven Samaveda svaras are: 1. Krushta 2. Prathama 3. Dvitiya 4. Tritiya 5. Chaturtha 6. Mantra 7. Atisvarya. Other than these seven, there are five Avaantara (intermediate) svaras: 1. Namanam 2. Vinatam 3. Abhigitam 4. Prenganam 5. Svaaram.

In 'Rik' Vedic study, there are four svaras: Udaatta, Anudaatta, Svaritha and Prachayam.

8. DETAILS OF SAMAVEDA KOUTUMA SAKHA

Koutuma Sakha has two parts: Mantra and Braahmana. The Mantra part is in Aarchika and Gana forms.

Aarchikam is in two parts: Purvaarchikam and Uttaraarchikam. Aarchikas, which are the basis of Prakriti Samas, are known as Purvaarchikam. Aarchikas, which are the basis of Uha Samas, are known as Uttaraarchikam.

Purvaarchika Riks:	650
Uttaraarchika Rikls:	1225
Total:	1875.

Bhashyas

Three great saints, Saayanacharya, Bharathaswamy and Madhava, have written commentaries for the Riks.

9. PRAKRITI RIK GANAS & UTTARA RIK GANAS

Mantra Part & Ganarupa Details

In Prakriti, that which is studied and sung in village is known as 'Graame Geyam'; that which is studied in forest is called 'Aranye Geyam'.
The 'Riks' in Purvaarchikam, when rendered into Gana (song), are known as 'Prakriti samas'. One Rik is sung as one Sama or many Samas.
The book 'Samaveda Sarvaanukramani' divides 'Prakriti Samas' into seven Ganas as under:

गायत्रं प्रथमं गानमाग्नेयं तु द्वितीयकम् ।

तृतीयमैन्द्रं गानं स्यात् पावमानं चतुर्थकम् ।।

अर्कद्वन्द्वव्रतं चेति पञ्चमं गानमुच्यते ।

षष्ठं च शुक्रियं गानं महानाम्नी च सप्तमम् ।।

एतानि सप्तगानानि प्रकृतेः कथितानि च ।।

They are: 1. Gaayatram 2. Aagneyam 3. Aindram 4. Paavamaanam 5. Arka, Dvandva, Vrata 6. Sukriyam 7. Mahanaamni.
The third group in the above list, 'Aindram' has six sub divisions: 1. Bahusami 2. Ekasami 3. Bruhati 4. Trishtup 5. Anushtup 6. Indrapuchcham.

Count of Samas

The Sama ganas of Prakriti, consisting of the seven divisions as above, can be enumerated as under:

1.	Gaayatram	1
2.	Aagneyam	180
3.	Aindram	
	Bahusami	132
	Ekasami	64
	Brihati	150
	Trishtup	49
	Anushtup	76
	Indrapuchcham	162
4. Paavamaanam		384
5. Arkaparva		89
	Dvandvaparva	77
	Vrataparva	84
6. Sukriyaparva		40
7. Mahanaamni		4
Total		1492
Aaranyagana Parisishta Samas		2
Total Sama Ganas of Prakriti		1494

As mentioned earlier, one ‘Rik’ mantra is chanted as either one or many Samaganas. Some examples are given as under:

Rik	No. of Ganas	Type of Gana
1. Tatsavitu	1	Gayatram
2. Tvanno Agne	2	Aagneyam
3. Agnirvrutraani	3	Aagneyam
4. Yagnaayagnaa vo	4	Aagneyam
5. Purutvaataa	5	Aagneyam
6. Prava Indraaya	6	Bahusami
7. Tarobirvaa	7	Brihati
8. Indraayenno Mrutvate	8	Paavamaanam
9. Svaadishtayaa	9	Paavamaanam
10. Yadvarcho Hiranya	10	Vrataparva
11. Uchchaatejaatamandasa	13	Paavamaanam
12. Punaanassoma Taarayaa	16	Paavamaanam
13. Pareetoshinchadaasudam	18	Paavamaanam

Majority of Purvaarchika Samas are used in Smartha karmas. Purvaarchika Riks and their Ganas are chanted together.

Uhaganam- Uttaraarchikam

Sama ganas, based on Riks in Uttaraarchikam, which are 1225 in number, are divided into two groups: Uham and Rahasyam (or Uhyam).
The ‘Grame Geya’ part of Prakriti has given birth to ‘Uha’ and the ‘Aranye Geya’ part into ‘Rahasyam’, as practised in the tradition of Vedic study. The two together are also called ‘Uha Rahasyam’. This is also stated in a different form: The Uha bhaga of Samas in Prakriti’s Grame Geyam is called Uham. The Uha bhaga of Samas in Aaranya Geyam is called Rahasyam.

Uham and Rahasyam have seven divisions each: 1. Dasaratram 2. Samvatsaram 3. Ekaaham 4. Ahinam 5. Satram 6. Prayaschittam 7. Kshutram. The ganas in these seven divisions are used in Sroutha karmas or yagas. The very names of these seven divisions point to this.

The Ganas following Uttaraarchika Riks do not follow standard uniform pattern. The ganas change depending on the yagnas wherein they are used. There is no direct Gana pattern specified for about 80 Uttaraarchika Riks. When these Riks are used in yagnas, Ganam should be performed as per rules of Gayatra Vidhana Sutram. Examples of such Riks are: 1. Indraagni Agatham Sitam 2. Eshapratnegnana Janmana 3. Bhavasva Vacha:.

Ganas in Uha and Rahasyam in the seven divisions mentioned above are enumerated below.

Name of Division	No. of Uha Samas	No. of Rahasya Samas
1. Dasaratram	222	29
2. Samvatsaram	152	41
3. Ekaham	158	23
4. Ahinam	146	31
5. Satram	121	14
6. Prayaschittam	50	19
7. Kshutram	87	52
Total	**936**	**209**
Grand Total of Samas in Uha and Rahasya		**1145**

Bhakti is the name given to parts of Sama. Bhaktis are five in number: Prastavam, Udgitam, Pratiharam, Upadravam, Nidhanam. Adding Omkara and Himkara to this group, the parts are also counted as seven sometimes. These have been explained in detail in Panchavidha Sutram, Draahyaayana Sutram and Chaandogyopanishad.

An example may be given of the three Riks ‘Uchchateja’, ‘Sanaindra’, ‘Enavisvani’, which are chanted together in Dasaratram (yaga) which includes Dvadasaratram. The three Samas are together taken as one Sama, divided into three parts, ‘Prathama Stotri’, ‘Dvitiya Stotri’ and ‘Tritiya Stotri’. As the three Riks are taken together, it is called ‘Trisam’.
Similarly in Samvatsara Satra Yaga, the Ganas of the three Riks ‘Pranisvaaniya’, ‘Aajaami Radge’ and ‘Salirodaksha’ follow the ‘Trisa’ pattern. Further in Ekaham the Riks ‘Pratnam Piyusham’, ‘Adiskechit’ and ‘Adhyatime’ fall in ‘Trisa’ pattern. In many yagnas such ‘Trisa’ groups are followed in Sama Ganam.

In Sroutha karmas (yagas), in accordance with the specification
‘आर्चिकं मनसा स्मृत्वा वाचा ॐकारेण गायेत्’
Bhaktis other than Prastavam should be sung as Pranavaganam.
Example can be given of ‘Upaasmai Gaayataararom’, ‘Abidhe Madhuraapayom’ and ‘Sana: Pavasva Sangavom’.
In Jyotishtoma yagna only, the nine Gayatrams from ‘Upaasmai Gaayata nara’ are chanted as ‘Dhurganam’ in Aajyastotram. Details of this are given clearly in Shadvimsa Braahmanam (2:8:3).

10. ASHTA BRAAHMANAS & UPANISHADS

In the Purva Mimamsa work called ‘Jaiminiya Nyayamala’, the characteristic of Braahmanam has been given. Sri Vidyaranya Swamigal quotes this in his commentary on Samaveda Bhashyam.

नास्त्येतद ब्राह्मणेत्यत्र लक्षणं विद्यतेऽथवा ।
नास्तीयन्तो वेदभागा इति क्लृप्तेरभावत: ।।
मन्त्रश्च बाह्मणं चेति द्वौ भागौ तेन मन्त्रत:
अन्यद्ब्राह्मणमित्येतत् भवेद् ब्राह्मणलक्षणम् ।। ज.न्या.मा २.१.८

That portion of Veda, which is other than mantra, is Braahmanam.

In Koutuma Sakha of Samaveda, there are eight Braahmanas, known as 'Ashta Braahmanas' (Ashta= eight).

1. Taandya Braahmanam, or Panchavimsa Braahmanam, or Proudha Braahmanam, or Maha Braahmanam.
2. Shadvimsa Braahmanam
3. Samavidhana Braahmanam
4. Aarsheya Braahmanam
5. Devataadhyaaya Braahmanam
6. Chandogya Braahmanam (or Mantra Braahmanam)
7. Samhitopanishad Braahmanam
8. Vamsa Braahmanam

Let us now look at them briefly.

1. Taandya Braahmanam ताण्ड्य ब्राह्मणम्

As this work contains 25 chapters, it is also called Panchavimsa Braahmanam. This talks about Soma yagas only. Soma yagas are performed using all three Vedas, Rig, Yajur and Sama. Maharishi Aapasthamba mentions in Sroutha Sutram:

इति छन्दोगब्राह्मणं भवति ताण्ड्यकम् and refers to Taandya Braahmanam which covers178 yagas from Agnishtomam to Visvasrujaamayanam. Performing yagas covered in this Braahmanam is unthinkable in the present day. But, to obtain the benefits from those yagas, one can chant it daily in Brahmayagna Prasnam. For this purpose, there is available a printed copy, which includes the commentary of Sri Sayanacharya and introduction by Kashi Sri Chinnaswamy Sastrigal.

2. Shadvimsa Braahmanam षड् विंश ब्राह्मणम्

The Braahmanam mentioned earlier, called Maha Braahmanam, has 25 chapters. The Shadvimsa Braahmanam contains the 26th chapter. This is also referred as Maha Braahmana Sesham (residual) and this itself contains 5 chapters and 48 khandas. The Ganam called Subrahmanya Aahvaanam, famous in yagas, is mentioned here.

There are some rare subjects covered in the fourth chapter here, like the origin of Agnis like Gaarhapatyam, superiority of oneself performing homam rather than asking Ritwik to perform etc.

The fifth chapter is considered very important. This is one of the authorities accepting images for Devatas. This also contains provisions for Santhis for various ills affecting the nation, such as misfortunes like untimely death of

people, diseases, bad dreams, diseases affecting elephants and other animals, splitting of earth, earthquake, fire in earth, earth expelling water, inundation of earth in running water, oozing from trees, flagpost falling down, fire in quarters, blood oozing out of cows' udder, images in temples quivering and weeping, increase in population, physical handicaps, ripping apart of mountain etc.
In a wonderful treatise on Santhis in this Braahmanam, while describing Devatas for Santhis, it explains the image of Devatas, weapons of Devatas like Indra and their powers.
This Braahmanam has a commentary by Sri Sayanacharya and has been printed even in Germany.

3. **Samavidhana Braahmanam** सामविधानब्राह्मणम्

This is the third in the Ashta Braahmanas. It has 3 chapters and 25 khandas. Here Sri Rudram, Purushasuktham, Ganapathi and Subramania Sukthas and Samas like Arishtavargam and Pavitravargam are set out and hence this Braahmanam is called Samavidhana Braahmanam. For those, who have no authority or ability to perform yagas, in order to reap the fruit of yagas, this Braahmanam teaches to chant some Samas with Rik and Gana. While defining the time to start chant of Japa, it guides that where such time is not specified, one should fast for three days and start on day of Pushya star.

This Braahmanam asserts that by chanting Samas with seven Svaras, all beings are satisfied, with each species getting pleased with a particular svara.
It describes the lineage of Gurus and says how this work was taught by Brahma to Brihaspathi, Brihaspathi to Narada, Narada to Vyasa, Vyasa to Jaimini and Jaimini to his disciples. A commentary written by Sri Vidyaranya (or Sayanacharya) is also available.

In Agni Puranam in 26^{th} chapter, Bhagavan Agni says that Pushkara taught Samavidhanam सामविधानम् . This part is included in the Annexure. It sets out the various benefits that accrue by chanting certain prescribed Samas and offering oblations.

4. **Aarsheya Braahmanam** आर्षेय ब्राह्मणम्

This Braahmanam teaches that by singing Samas along with Rishi, Chandas and Devata, one can reap benefits here and hereafter. It sets out the names of Rishis in order for each Sama and hence it is called 'Aarsheyam'. There are 3 chapters and 82 khandas. Hence it is appropriate to call it 'Asitidvayam'. A commentary by Sri Sayanacharya is available.

5. **Devataadhyaya Braahmanam** देवताध्यायब्राह्मणम्

There are four khandas in this Braahmanam. As Devatas are mentioned here for different Samas, this is called Devataadhyayam. The genesis of names of chandas like Gayatri, Ushnik, Kakubh, Anushtup, Brihati, Pankti, Trishtup, Jagati etc. is given here. As Gayatri Devi is established here to be Virat Devi, all can study this Braahmanam. Meditation on Gayatri removes deficiencies in chant of Akshara (letter), Mantra, Tantra (action) etc.

6. **Chaandogyopanishad- Chandoga Braahmanam** छान्दोग्योपनिषत् - छन्दोगब्राह्मणम्

This Upanishad has ten chapters. The first two chapters are called as Mantra Braahmanam. Here mantras relating to karmas like Vivaha, Pumsavanam, Seemantham, Jaatakarma, Namakaranam, Choulam, Upanayanam, Samaavartanam, seven Paaka yagnas like Ashtaka, Kamya karmas, karmas like Madhuparkam etc. are taught.
There are two commentaries available- Sri Sayanacharya Bhashyam and Sri Gunu Vishnu Bhashyam.
The next eight chapters, i.e. from 3rd to 10th form the Upanishad part. This is the largest Upanishad in Sama Veda. There is a commentary of Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavat-padacharya. Many Sutras in Brahma Sutram discuss in detail the thoughts in this Upanishad along with the principles of Purvapaksha (Purva Mimamsa). This Upanishad is like a Vidya treasure and contains Jaanasruti Upaakhyaanam, Madhu Vidya, Saandilya Vidya, Upakosala Vidya, Satyakama-Jaabaala Upaakhyaanam, Narada-Sanatkumara Samvadam and its components including Bhuma Vidya, Mahavakya Upadesa, Indra-Virochana Upaakhyaanam, Dahara Vidya and Prajapati Vidya. Essentially it places emphasis on the tradition of Guru and Sishya (disciple).

7. **Samhitopanishad Braahmanam** संहितोपानिषत्-ब्राह्मणम्

Riks are known by the name of Samhita, as they are studied right from the time after upanayanam till the end of one's life. As this Upanishad contains secret thoughts about the Riks, it is called Samhitopanishad. This Braahmanam has five khandas and there is a commentary by Sri Sayanacharya. It explains the marks of disciple, duties of Guru and the greatness of danam of cow, land and vidya as compared with other danas.

8. **Vamsa Braahmanam** वंशब्राह्मणम्

In this Braahmanam the lineage of Gurus from Sarvadatta and Gaargya upto Brahma is described. The term उपजायत, occurring in this text means 'was born'. Here the meaning is that the disciple was born from the vidya

of the Guru. The correct term should be उपाजायत, which has become उपजायत being Veda, as explained by Sri Sayana. It is important to contemplate on Guru Parampara. Here in the beginning it states: Obeisance to Brahma, obeisance to brahmanas, obeisance to many Devatas etc.

In Samaveda Upakarma, Tarpanam has been prescribed for the Maharishis mentioned in this Braahmanam as part of Utsarjanam. The Samaveda Parampara has come down to us through many Rishis starting from Brahma upto Sarvadatta. Sri Sayanacharya has written a commentary on this Braahmanam.

As he mentions

प्रौढादिब्रह्मणान्यादौ ।

सप्त व्याख्याय चादिमम् ।।

वंशाख्यं ब्राह्मणं विद्वान्

सायणो व्याचिकीर्षति ।। it is clear that he has written commentary on Chaandogya Upanishad also. However it is not available as yet. Scholars should put in efforts to locate it and teach the same to disciples. In the current practice, the commentaries of Sri Sayanacharya, Sri Bharataswami and Sri Madhava on Samaveda Koutuma Purvaarchikam and Uttaraarchikam are taught.

11. TEXTS ON SROUTHA, LAKSHANA, PRAYOGA & SIKSHA

Sroutha Lakshana Texts

Sroutha Sutras are known as Kalpa Sutras. They define the usage of Vedic mantras in yagas. The term Sroutham refers to yaga.

There are 10 Sroutha Sutras for Samavedis:

1. Draahyaayana
2. Anupada
3. Nidhana
4. Kalpa
5. Upagrantha
6. Kshudra
7. Taandya Lakshana
8. Panchavidha Sutra
9. Kalpaanupada
10. Anustotra

1. Draahyaayana Sutra

As Samavedis in our parts follow this Sutra given by Draahyaayana Maharishi, they are known as Draahyaayana Sutris. There are 31 Patalas (chapters), each having 3 khandas (sections). There is a commentary called ‘Dipika’ by Tanvi.

Sri Sayanacharya mentions तथा च द्राह्यायण: सूत्रकार: in his commentary on Maha Braahmanam. 'Laatyaayana Sutra', which follows this, is followed by Samavedis in the north. Gobila Grihya Sutra is followed in practice by north Indians even now.

It appears that one Rudraskanda has written commentary on Draahyaayana Sutra. This appears to be preserved in manuscript form in Oriental Libraries.

2. **Anupada Sutra** अनुपदसूत्रम्

Following Taandya Braahmanam, usage of Rig and Yajur Veda mantras in yagas is given here. It appears this text is not available in our country. Manuscript is preserved in Germany. The text, as per available indications, starts with

यजुषां कर्मसु लिङ्गतो विधानं अर्थग्रहणात् and ends with

स सर्वांश्च लोकान् आप्नोतिकामान् अपहतपाप्मा विशोकश्च भवति सम्पन्नांश्च जयति. Our elders have stated that in Upakarma, during Vedaramabha, we may include chant of the beginning part of this Sutra in between Draahyaayana Sutra and Nidhana sutra.

3. **Nidhana Sutra**

In this third Kalpa Sutra, there are ten Prapathakas (chapters), each having 13 khandas. This is written by Patanjali Mahrishi.

Out of the six Vedangas, viz. Siksha, Chandas, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpasutra, Chandas is taken up here for detailed treatment through 7 khandas in the first Prapathaka. In the remaining Prapathakas, Prayogas (usages) relating to Sroutha (yaga) are covered.

4. **Kalpa Sutra**

This text is authored by a Rishi named Gaargyamasaka. This Kalpa Sutra appears to be of more ancient origin than those by Draahyaayana, Aapasthamba, Bodhayana and Katyayana. There is a commentary by one Varadaraja. There are 11 chapters and 115 khandas. Sri Sayanacharya, the Veda Bhashyakara, cites this Kalpa Sutra in his works. Prayogakaras like Aandappillai consider this Sutra as a highly authoritative text. This Sutra specifies Samas for all yagas in Taandya Braahmanam.

5. **Upagrantha**

This fifth Sutra is written by Katyayana Maharishi. There are four Prapathakas. This generally specifies Prayaschittas (expiatory rituals) for lapses in yagnas. There is a commentary by one Venkatesa Panditha.

6. **Kshudra Kalpa sutra**

In Aarsheya Kalpa Sutra, the first 11 out of a total of 17 chapters are called Kalpa Sutra. The rest are known as Kshudra Kalpa Sutra. This separation is similar to that between Panchavimsa Braahmanam and Shadvimsa Braahmanam.

There is a commentary for this by one Srinivasacharyar Satakratu Thathacharyar. In the beginning of this commentary the author pays obeisance to Masaka Maharishi of Garga gotra, the author of Kalpa Sutra, Draahyaayana Maharishi, the author of Draahyaayana Sutra and Katyayana Maharishi, the author of Upagrantha. Three Prapathakas of this Kshudra Kalpa sutra were printed in Lahore prior to our independence.

श्रीकल्पसूत्रोपग्रन्थकृतो गुरूवरान् भजे ।

श्रीगार्ग्यमशकद्राह्यायणकात्यायनाह्वयान् ।।

This Kshudra Kalpa Sutra covers:

Various Kamya yagas for fulfilment of desire for relief from disease, rains, cattle, fame, Brahmavarchas (Brahmic brilliance) etc.

The count of Aksharas (letters) in each Stotra

Prayaschittas for unexpected obstacles to yagas

Usage of Kshudra Samas and Prayaschitta Sama Ganas.

7. **Taandya Lakshanam ताण्ड्यलक्षणम्**

This has 3 Prapathakas and 34 Kandas. This sets out the place of Stotras in yagnas. It starts with अथ यज्ञे शब्दस्तोत्रविधिं (व्याख्यास्याम:) वाक्यशेष: ।।

The words appear to indicate Kalaksharas of Stotras in yagnas. This text is considered to be a very tough Lakshana text.

8. **Panchavidha Sutram** पञ्चविधसूत्रम्

This sets out the five Bhaktis for all Samas in Prakriti as under.

प्रस्तावोद्गीथप्रतिहारोपद्रवनिधनानि भक्तय:।

The Bhaktis are five or seven. तत् पाञ्चविध्यम् - साप्तविध्यम्

There are 2 Prapathakas and 14 khandas.

While chanting Gana in yagas, one should add ‘Himkara’ before Prastava Bhakti and ‘Omkara’ before Udgitha Bhakti.

There are commentaries in languages like German and English.

9. **Kalpaanupadam** कल्पानुपदम्

There are two Prapathakas and 24 khandas. This starts with

आचार्यप्रमाण निर्द्रेशो ब्राह्मणसूत्रार्षेय कल्प

ऋक्सामाम्नायोहोपदेशमाचारं ……

There are directions on chanting Gayatra Sama in Stotras like Bahishpavamanam, Nama Subramanyaahvaanam in Satra yagas and Ahinakratu etc.

10. Anustotram अनुस्तोत्रम्

Samas are sung on the basis of Svara, Varna and Matrakala of Rik. Further details including characteristics of svaras etc. in case of Samas with different chandas are covered here. Though the text book is not available, the content is preserved to this day through the Guru-Sishya Parampara.

Other Texts

Naigam नैगम्

This book has two Prapathakas. The first Prapathakam starts with यं अथार्षमार्चिकस्याग्नेत्वमग्नेऽग्नि: and specifies Rishis for each Rik mantra of Prakriti Rik and Uttara Rik. The second Prapathakam specifies Devata for each Rik.

Aarsheya Braahmanam specifies Rishis for Prakriti Samas and Devatas in some places. This book Naigam gives names of Rishis and Devatas for Riks only.

Sri Sayanacharya, the Bhashyakara, quotes this book as authority in Samaveda commentary.

आर्षेयदीपिका (आरण्यकम्)

This book specifies Rishi, Chandas and Devata for Samas after mentioning the Rik. Only the Aaranya part is available; it is written by Bhatta Bhaskaraadhvarindra.

सामवेदसप्तलक्षणम् Samaveda Sapthalakshanam

This book gives Lakshanam for the Aarchika part. There are 7 Prakaranas and 138 verses. The author of this book is Narayana, son of Souri. He says: शौरिसूनु: प्रवक्ष्यामि.

Prakarana 1 & 2: Samanam Visargalopalopou समानं विसर्गलोपालोपा

Prakarana 3: Ranga: रङ्ग:

Prakarana 4: Vilingyam विलिंग्यम्

Prakarana 5: Naparatapare नपरतपरे

Prakarana 6: Aavarni आवर्णि

Prakarana 7: Anagraha Aningayam अनग्रह: अनिङ्गयम्

Those who have learnt chanting Samaveda can understand these Prakaranas well and easily. It seems that Yajurveda Saptalakshanam was also written by the same author.

Samaveda Lakshana Texts

1. **Gayatra Vidhanam** गायत्रविधानम्.

This book, authored by Sri Sankaracharya, speaks about Gayatra Samas. There are 3 khandas and there is a commentary. For Gayatra Sama, तद्विविड्डाइ 'Tadvividdai', the svara is in Prastava bhakti. It is sung with aksharas in the first part of the Rik. Nidhana-bhedas depending on one's desire and certain special features of other Samas are mentioned here.

2. Riktantram ऋक्तन्त्रम्

This book, authored by Saakataayana Maharishi, gives Lakshanas for Aarchikas. Some say that this book was written by Oudavraji. In Sarvaanukramani it says: ऋचां तन्त्रं व्याकरणम् शाकटायनदेवेन. Nagesa also says: अक्षरतन्त्रव्याख्याता सत्यव्रतसामश्रमी ऋक्तन्त्रप्रणेतु: शाकटायनस्य....and thus refers to Saakataayana as the author.
This book has 5 Prapathakas and 32 khandas. The book Riktantra Vyakaranam ऋक्तन्त्रव्याकरणम् is famous. It was printed in Lahore in 1933 by Sri Suryakantha Sastri, M.A.,M.O.L.

3. Laghu Riktantrasangraha: लघुऋक्तन्त्रसङ्ग्रह:

This book has 158 verses. It gives in the starting verses the preview of the content in the succeeding verses. It cites examples, all in verses.

4. Riktantra Vivriti: ऋक्तन्त्रविवृति:

There are 3 Prakaranas: 1. Gayatra Ganaprakaram 2. Svaritha Nirupanam 3. Ekasruti Vidhanam for Prachaya svara. Those who wish to perform yagas should study this book.

5. Samatantram: सामतन्त्रम्

This is a book of Lakshanas for Prakriti Samas, written by Oudavraji Maharishi. There are 15 Prapathakas and 158 khandas.

6. Samatantra Prakasika: सामतन्त्रप्रकाशिका

This is an explanatory text for the Samatantra Bhashya; it explains with examples. It is understood to have been written by one Mahaganapathi.

7. Samatantra Sangraham: सामतन्त्रसङ्ग्रह:

This is written by one Vanchinathan. He mentions the Sutras that are used in each Sama and correlates them.

8. Aksharatantram: अक्षरतन्त्रम्

Here Akshara means Stobham. This book gives Lakshana of Sthobhas. There are two Prapathakas and 26 khandas. A total of 260 Sutras here tell us about Sthobhas. This book is also known as संज्ञालक्षणं संज्ञासूत्रम्. Sri Sathyavrata Samasrami Bhattacharya has written commentary for this. Research scholars opine that this book is more ancient than Niruktyha of Yaskar and Vyakarana of Panini.

9. Pushpasutram/ Phullasutram: पुष्पसूत्रम् / फल्लसूत्रम्

This book, written by Varasi Maharishi, gives Lakshanas for Uha and Rahasya Samas. There are ten Prapathakas and 129 khandas. There are 18 Parvas. It is essential for Samaveda students to know this. Sri Ajatasatru Bhattopadhyayay appears to have written commentary for this. There is an opinion that this Sutram (book) is written by one Pushyayasa: Oudavraji.

Phullabodha or Phullasangraha: फल्लबोध:

This book, written by Sri Ganesa, gives Lakshanas for all Uha and Rahasya Samas from Aamahiyavam.

10. Avagrahasutra: अवग्रहसूत्रम्

There are 12 Sutras. Avagraha is breaking down a word (Pada), while chanting Padapatham of Rik. This is called Veshtanapadam. Padas having more than four Aksharas attain *Veshtanam*. There is also an excellent commentary.

11. Hitavakyam हितवाक्यम्

This book tells us as to how many *Veshtanapadas* are there in a Rik. For example it says there are two *Veshtanapadas* in the Rikpadam अग्निंदूतम् . This is an excellent Lakshana work to know the *Veshtanapadas* in all Prakriti Padas. We can also know Lakshanas for Uttararik Padas.

12. Sthobhanusamhara: स्तोभानुसंहार:

This book deals with the Sthobha padas in Samas and has 44 verses. Sthobham refers to Padas, which are sung more than the Aksharas in the Rik and more expansively. Sthobhas, which are sung at the beginning and end of each Prakriti Sama, should be added in every Pada, while chanting in yagas. This can be seen in Sama धेनु.

13. Maatralakshanam मात्रालक्षणम्

This book, written by Varasi Maharishi, tells us about the time the Aksharas in Rik Samas should be lengthened or shortened while singing. It begins by saying अथातो ह्रस्वदीर्घप्लुतमात्राण्यक्षराणि व्याख्यास्याम:

Aksharas are lengthened or shortened in three ways:

Hrasvam ह्रस्वं – Time of one Maatra.

Dirgham दीर्घं – Time of two Maatras.

Plutham प्लुतं – Time of three Maatras.

While doing Parayana or Japa, chanting should be done with appropriate Maatrakala. While teaching disciples, the period may be increased by a half Maatrakala.

Aaroha svaram is called Pratyutkraamam; this is eightfold. Avaroha svaram is called Atikraamam; this is fourfold. There is another Avaroham called Karshanam, which is fivefold.

14. Aarchikalakshanamआर्चिकलक्षणम्

This book deals with svaras of Riks and has 16 verses. Svaras for Riks are fourfold: Udaattam, Anudaattam, Svaritham and Prachayam.

15. Chalaprakriya छलप्रक्रिया

This explains the definitions of terms of Chalaaksharas. Chalaaksharas are Aksharas which help in identifying svaras and Padas in Riks and Samas. From one Akshara we can find how many svaras and Padas are there. There are 22 verses. A Chalaakshara Kaarika of 8 verses is available. There are Samgnaas for all Riks- Samas.

16. Chalaaksharani छलाक्षराणि

Once Chalaaksharas are committed to memory, the svaras and Aksharas of Rik-Samas will not go wrong. Normally at the close of Parayana we utter the verse:

विसर्गबिन्दुमात्राणि पदपादाक्षराणि च ।

न्यूनानि चातिरिक्तानि क्षमस्व परमेश्वर।।

While doing Parayanam with Chalaaksharas in mind, it will not be necessary to utter this verse. One can of course seek pardon for mistakes based on tradition.

17. Samaprakasanam सामप्रकाशनम्

One can learn many subtle aspects easily from this book of verses on Prakriti Samas. Late Varahur Sri Krishna Srouthigal, who preserved the Samaveda

traditional chanting procedure, has done yeoman service by publishing texts from Avagraha Sutra to Samaprakasanam.

18. Ravanbhet रावणभेट्

This book teaches important Lakshanas for all Vedas. This is preserved in Madras University.

Siksha Texts

1. **Paniniya Siksha:** Though this text is common to all Vedas, it is considered to be important among Samaveda Lakshana texts. When the tiger carries its young calf by its teeth, the calf will drop down if carried softly and will be hurt if carried hard. Just as the tiger carries the calf carefully, this text explains the method of pronouncing Veda mantra Aksharas and the merits and demerits in such pronunciation.
2. **Naradiya Siksha:** In this book written by Sri Narada Maharishi, the Lakshanas of Rik Samas are given. This has two Prapathakas and 16 khandas. It has commentary by Sri Bhattasobhakara.
3. **Goutamiya Siksha:** This book called Samyoga Srinkhala संयोग श्रृङ्खला is written by Goutama Maharishi. It has two Prapathakas and 16 khandas. It talks about the union of Aksharas in Rik Samas.
4. **Lomasi Siksha:** This book, written by Gargacharya, has 8 khandas. It talks about specialities of svaras and method of pronouncing them. It starts with लोमशिन्यां प्रवक्ष्यामि गर्गाचार्येण चिन्तिताम् ।

Saaksham, Crow (kakam), peacock (Mayuram) etc. stand for sound for 1, 2 and 3 Matra-kalas.

5. **Gitikalpam:** गीतिकल्पम्

This book, also known as Gitikalpa Parisishtam, gives Prastavabhakti for each Sama in Uhagana. There are 24 khandas. Thios is written by Sri Rama Sukla.

Khaadira Grihyasutram खादिरगृह्यसूत्रम्

A text teaching us about Grihyakarmas is Grihya Sutram. Grihyakarmas are generally to be performed in Oupasanagni (Grihyagni). Maharishis like Aapasthamba, Bodhayna and Aasvalayana have written Grihya Sutras along with Sroutha Sutras. However in Samaveda, Sroutha Sutra by Maharishi Draahyaayana and Grihya Sutra by Maharishi Khaadira are being followed. Though many Rishis' names are found in Vamsa Braahmanam, Khaadira's name is not there. Hence it is possible to guess that Draahyaayana was also known as Khaadira.

However, traditionally, Khaadira Grihyasutram has been specified for Samavedis. There are 4 Patalas and 19 khandas. Sri Rudra Skanda has written commentary.

Gautama Dharmasutram गौतमधर्मसूत्रम्

As there are many special dharmas mentioned in this Gautama Dharmasutra, not covered in other Dharmasutras, this Dharmasutra should be followed in practice.

Gautama Dharmasmriti गौतमधर्मस्मृतिः

In this Smriti book Maharishi Gautama has given details in verse form, of many karmas like Sandhyavandanam for Samavedis. There are 14 chapters and 650 verses. This book comes in the series of teachings by Maharishi Gautama to Maharishi Narada.

Gautama Aparasutram गौतमअपरसूत्रम्

This book by Maharishi Gautama has two Patalas and 13 khandas. There is a commentary by Varahur Sri Krishnaswamy Srouthigal.

Aparakarika अपरकारिका

For Prayoga, Karika (explanatory text) is very necessary. This book has 9 khandas. In this book Karika has been given on the basis of Aparasutra and the commentary thereon.

Grihya Parisishtam गृह्यपरिशिष्टम्

This book explains certain karmas not covered in Grihyasutra and also Prayogas for certain karmas covered therein. This book contains the writings of many Maharishis. We can see the name of the respective Maharishi at the end of each khanda. This is an excellent Prayoga text, having two Prapathakas.

Sroutha Prayoga

This book explains well the Prayoga followed by Udgatha and others, following authoritative texts like Draahyaayana Sutra. Sri Aandapillai has written Prayoga for three Sutras. Performers of yagas accept Sri Aandapillai as authority.

Sroutha Karika

This book gives serially in verse form the yagnakarmas to be done by Udgatha and others in yagas like Agnishtoma. This text should be memorised by those who perform Aartvijyam (function of Ritwik, the main Priest). Matters covered by Sutras and Prayoga text are serially mentioned here for use during Prayoga. It starts with अत्रादौ व्रतउ अद्गाता महदित्यादिकं जपेत.

In Prayogas related to Samaveda in Srouthakarmas, the separate **Sroutha Prayoga Prayaschitta Karika** helps in doing Prayaschittas for mistakes committed. Here in 108 verses, easy Prayaschittas, which offer great

benefits, are taught. This is called Kalpa or Ganesa karika. The traditional manuscript is preserved. Srouthagnas should try to bring this rare book in print.

Samaveda Smartha Prayoga Texts

1. Prayoga Parijatham: Purvaapara (Karmas related to life and post-death) Prayoga for Samavedis has been written by Purushottamabhatta. For Smartha karmas the Prayoga by Sri Aandapillai is also available.

2. Sridhariyam: This book teaches Smartha Purvapara Prayoga karmas.

3. Vamanakarika: This book, written by Vamana, tells in verses about rules for many kamya karmas with Purvapara Prayoga, following Khadira Grihyasutra and Rudraskanda Vritti.

4. Satyayana Karika: This book in verse form in 30 khandas tells about Purva Prayoga, Vivaha etc. in serial order. If everyone, who does Vedadhyayana, studies Purvapara Prayoga books and memorises this type of Karikas, he will find it very useful while using Griha Prayoga. The order in the Karika follows that in Khadira Grihyasutra.

5. Sayyar prayoga: In this ancient text Purvapara Prayogas are covered in the way they are used while guiding the Grihastha to perform. It is noteworthy that this book was a forerunner for other Purvapara Prayoga texts in later times.

6. In current practice Prayoga texts such as Smartha Tantra Sitanidhi, Prayoga Kusumavali and Samagahgani Sangraham are used.

12. JAIMINIYA SAKHA OR TALAVAKARA SAKHA IN SAMAVEDA

Out of all Aranyakas in Samaveda, Talavakara Aranyakam, also known as Talavakara Braahmanam, occurs in Jaiminiya Braahmanam. The last part of this Braahmanam is 'Kenopanishad', also known as 'Talavakara Upanishad'. The salient point of this Upanishad is that Parabrahmam came in the form of Ambal, rooted out the ego of Devas like Agni and Vayu and taught Brahmavidya to Indra, taking the form of Uma. Sri Adisankara Bhagavadpada wrote 'Pada' Bhashyam for this Upanishad and, not being satisfied, he also wrote 'Vakya' Bhashyam. Thus he bestowed on this Upanishad the greatness of writing two Bhashyas, which he had not done in respect of any other Upanishad.

For Jaiminiya Sakha there is also Aarsheya Braahmanam.

It is our Sri Kamakoti Peetham that revived this Jaiminiya Sakha. In the Himalayan effort of Sri Mahaperiyaval, Sri Periyaval and Sri Bala Periyaval for protection of Vedas, the resurrection of Jaiminiya Sakha is an important milestone. Brahmasri Makarabhushana Srouthigal has taught Jaiminiya Sakha to more than 50 Vidyarthis in Tohur village in Kallanai in Tamilnadu. Jaiminiya Sakha Samaveda Pathasala is running there even today in simple style with the blessings of Sricharanal. This Pathasala was started by Srimatham about 30 years ago at Tohur with Sri Srouthigal.

A fact that came to my attention recently is that there is no printed text for Jaiminiya Sakha and that students learn the Veda with the help of manuscript prepared by Sri Makarabhushana Srouthigal by copying the same. Samavedis should come forward to print Jaiminiya Sakha Samaveda book.

13. RESEARCH IN SAMAVEDA BY FOREIGN EXPERTS

1. In the year 1848 one Theodore Benfey has published his research in Samaveda in German language.
2. In the year 1873 one Sri Satyavrata Samasrami put in great effort and printed Samaveda in Kolkata.
3. In the year 1893 one Ralph T.H.Griffith printed and published 'Samaveda Samhita' with translation in English.
4. A Finland scholar Mr.Asko Parpola researched and published 'The Literature and Study of the Jaiminiya Samaveda' in 1973 through Finnish Oriental Society. He also published another research work, 'The Decipherment of the Samavedic Notation of the Jaiminiya Sama Veda' in 1988.
5. In 1895 one Mr.H.Oertel published 'The Jaiminiya or Talavakara Upanishad Brahmana', with original in Samskrit and English translation.

14. SOME DECEASED SAMAVEDA RATNAS

Greatness and Importance of Teachers of Veda

Our Vedas have continued from time immemorial in the tradition of Guru and Sishya. That is why Veda is called 'Sruti'. There is a strict rule that nobody should study Vedas and Vedanta Sastras by himself from books. Disciples should learn them only from Guru directly.

नाध्यापयिष्यन् निगमान् श्रमेणोपाध्यायलोका यदि शिष्यवर्गान् ।

निर्वेदवादं किल निर्वितानमुर्वीर्तलं हन्त तदाऽ भविष्यत् ।।

If those who study Vedas with great effort do not teach Vedas and Vedanta Sastras to disciples, there will be no continuous tradition of knowledge of Vedas available. Bhagavan protects Vedas, which are His life-breath, through such teachers alone. That is why Bhagavan says ' ब्राह्मणो मम देवता'

'Brahmana is my Devata'.

लौकिकं वैदिकं वापि तथाध्यात्मिकमेव च।

आददीत यतो ज्ञानं तं पूर्वमभिवादयेत् ।।

One must pay obeisance first to the Guru, who teaches not just mundane knowledge, but Vedas, Sastras including rituals and rules of conduct and spiritual lore including secrets of Vedanta regarding Jiva, Brahman etc. Such a Guru is called 'Vidya Guru'. Study of Vedas is Brahmavidya. The first

teaching of Srimad Bhagavapadacharya is वेदो नित्यमधीयताम् - Veda shall be studied daily.

अभिवादनशीलस्य नित्यं वृद्धोपसेविनः ।
चत्वारि तस्य वर्धन्ते आयुर्विद्या यशो बलम् ।।

For one who worships elders always, four qualities grow- long life, knowledge, fame and strength. One who teaches Veda today has also studied once under his Guru with discipline.

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तम् Our Veda Vidya has come to us from time immemorial only in the tradition of Guru-Sishya.

गुरुशिष्य उभयाधीनो विद्याप्रचारः ।
अद्य शिष्यभूतः श्वो गुरुर्भवेत् ।
गुरुशिष्यपरम्परयैव विद्याप्रचारस्य शाश्वतिकत्वम् ।।

The disciple, who studies Veda with discipline from his Guru today, ascends to the seat of Guru tomorrow. Following this Guru-Sishya tradition, Veda Vidvans, who are well versed in Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas and Sastras and who live upto the instructions preached therein, have bequeathed this glorious tradtion to the succeeding generation of Sishyas. It is not possible to do anything in return for the great service rendered by them. Hence knowing some of the Samaveda jewels, who preserved the Veda for posterity, will show the right path to the generations of Sishyas. It will indeed be very useful to future disciples if the present day Veda Vidvans record the history of their Gurus in detail.

1. **Svargiya Brahmasri Mahalinga Srouthigal, Kanchipuram Srimatham Samaveda Pathasala:**
   Konerirajapuram Svargiya Brahmasri Mahalinga Srouthigal was a Salakshana Samaveda Vidvan. His forefathers are said to have been Diwans in the Tiruvananthapuram Maharaja Samsthanam. They belonged to the glorious Srotriya family of Bharadvaja Gothra.
   Sri Mahalinga Srouthigal was very devoted to Sri Acharyal of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. As per instructions of Sricharanal, Srimatham Samaveda Pathasala is running excellently well, together with other Veda classes in Kanchipuram in Yanaikkatti Street. It is noteworthy that Sri Srouthigal, while serving as teacher in that Pathasala from 1945 onwards, had prepared hundreds of Salakshana Samaveda Vidvans. Sri Srouthigal had been unrelenting in practice of Vedic rituals and good conduct. He had interest in Mantra Sastra also. There is no doubt that it will be meritorious for us to always remember with gratitude the Guru who has taught us the Veda.
   When Prativadi Bhayankaram Sri Annangarachariar of Kanchipuram took ill, he approached Sri Srouthigal, who advised him to arrange for complete

Samaveda Samhita Parayanam and listen to it and added that he would get well soon by God's grace. Sri Annangarachariar accepted his advice and asked him to do the Parayanam himself and, listening to it, he completely got well. This incident is being mentioned with pride in his disciple circles. Sri Srouthigal attained the Acharya's Holy Feet in 1985. Even today his disciples have been engaged in teaching Samaveda to their students.

2. **Svargiya Brahmasri R. Dharmaraja Srouthigal alias R. Venkatarama Sastrigal:**
   There cannot be any Veda Vidvan who has not heard about Brahmasri R. Dharmaraja Srouthigal of Bharadvaja Gothram.The forefathers of Sri Srouthigal have been teachers of Samaveda for seven continuous generations in Sri Raja Veda Kavya Pathasala in Kumbakonam. This Pathasala was established in 1542 by Sri Nagamamba sametha Advaita Vidyacharya Maharaja Saheb Bhagavan Sri Govinda Dikshitar in the land where he had performed yaga. In Sri Dikshitar's family was born Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal, the 68th Peethadhipathi of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, known as Mahaperiyaval. Brahmasri Srouthigal was the proud seventh generation teacher from his family in that Pathasala. This great soul served as teacher of Samaveda and subsequently the Principal of the Pathasala for a total period of 50-60 years and offered himself for protection of Vedas. The lineage of his disciples continues to teach Samaveda there even after his time. It is to be written in letters of gold that most of the Samaveda Vidvans of today have been either his direct disciples or have studied under his disciples.

   My father, Samavedam Svargiya Brahmasri P.Vaidyanatha Sastrigal was his disciple. My father also studied under Brahmasri Swami Sastrigal, who lived in Tiruvaiyaru in Ammal Agraharam and who was of the eleventh generation in the family of Sri Appayya Dikshitar. While Sri Kanchi Mahaperiyaval was camping in Tiruvaiyaru, my father, who was then a brahmachari, rendered Pooja service. My revered father did Samaveda Parayanam every day in the Srimatham at Kumbakonam till his last day. He did Samaveda Parayanam in Utsavas in many sacred centres along with his Sambandhi, Umaiyalpuram Svargiya Samavedam Krishnamurthy Dikshitar.

   My revered father and Svargiya Mathusri Narayani Ammal took me to Sri Dharmaraja Srouthigal for studying Samaveda and requested him to take me under his tutelage. Sri Dharmaraja Srouthigal taught me Samaveda right till Ashtabraahmanam, except for some parts of Uha Rahasyam.

Sri Srouthigal practised rules of conduct of Sastras; he was a master in yoga too. He had experienced the truths of Patanjala Yoga Sutram. He used to perform Yogasanas every day without fail.
Sri Srouthigal had the habit of collecting and preserving ancient palm leaf texts. Even before they were printed, rare Samatantram, Riktantram, Ashtabraahmanas etc. were written by him in neat handwriting with large letters in Grantha script with special Ayurvedic pencil. Many Vidvans take copies of them even now for use; such is the clarity of his writing. His family is preserving those manuscripts carefully even today.

Many are the Vidvans who used to approach him for clarification of doubts. In 1974, while studying in the Kumbakonam college, I used to go to Sri Raja Veda Kavya Pathasala in the evenings for Vedic study. At that time I used to see Sri Srouthigal and Svargiya Samaveda Vidvan Marudur Santhana Srouthigal doing research with palm leaf records. I still see clearly with the eyes of my mind the scene of Svargiya Marudur Santhana Srouthigal carrying on his head books and palm leaf documents and walking 10-15 km to the Pathasala. How they have worked for protection of Vedas! It is astounding to think.

Brahmasri Srouthigal performed Gayatri Japa a thousand times every day. He used to take bath in the nearby Kaveri river during Brahma muhurtham as laid down in Sastras. He would stay in the Pathasala whole day and look after the students.
He used to buy Homeopathic medicine out of the monthly stipend of Rs.30/- given to us by Veda Dharmasastra Paripalana Sabha for our Vedic study and distribute the medicine among sick students of the Pathasala. Sri Madhyarjunan, son of Samavedi Svargiya Sri Ekanatha Iyer, who was the Secretary of the Veda Dharmasastra Paripalana Sabha, Ramji alias Ramachandran, the second son of Sri Srouthigal and myself had our Samavedic education together. Sri Mahalinga Srouthigal, the eldest son of Sri Srouthigal is imparting education to disciples as the eigth generation teacher of his family.

Mamahopadhyaya Brahmasri Raju Sastrigal, known as Padavakya Pramana Paravara Mannargudi Sri Thyagarajadhvari, of the lineage of Adaiyapalam Srimad Appayya Dikshitar, has expressed salutation to Brahmasri Venkatarama Sastrigal, grandfather of Brahmasri Dharmaraja Srouthigal. Mannargudi Brahmasri Raju Sastrigal had studied Samaveda upto Lakshanam and mastered many deep Samaveda texts including commentaries. The verse of salutation अभिनन्दनम् appears in his book 'Sama Svara Vimarsam'.
श्रीमच्चम्पककाननाख्य-नगरीमध्याग्रहारोत्तमे

वास्तव्यस्त्विह वास्तवार्थरसिकश्शास्त्रार्थसारं विदन् ।
श्रीमद्वेङ्कटराम-सामगवरः श्रौतीन्द्रपक्षस्त्वयम्
संक्षोदक्षम इत्यमंस्त महतां त्यागाधिराजाध्वरी ॥

Similarly Mamahopadhyaya Tiruvisanallur Brahmasri Ramasubba Sastrigal, the great Samaveda Vidvan, in his book 'Samaveda Svaramatradi Tatvavilasa', has written a verse of salutation to Brahmasri Venkatarama Sastrigal.

श्रीमद्वेङ्कटरामसूरिमणिना श्रीसामवेदाश्रितः
मार्गो यः प्रथितः पुरातनतमस्संपाठित स्सांप्रतम् ।
सोऽयं लक्ष्मणशास्त्रसारविदुषा श्रीरामसुब्बाख्यया
ख्यातेनापि महीसुरेण पटुतां नीतः प्रमाणाध्वना ॥

These salutations have been offered about 150 years ago to the grandfather of Sri Srouthigal. It was Svargiya Vedasamrakshakaratnam Brahmasri V.R.Lakshmikantha Sarma who celebrated in a grand scale the Sathabhishekam of Sri Srouthigal in Sri Raja Veda Pathasala itself. It was he alone who made the Samaveda world realise the contribution of Sri Srouthigal. In the felicitation function of Sathabhishekam, Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal, the 69th Peethadhipathi of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, who came for blessing him, praised him and honoured him with the lofty title of 'Samaveda Ratnam' and a shawl. This is still green in my memory. I was then the Vice-Principal of the Pathasala.

Sri Srouthigal published around the year 1930 the books in Granthakshara, on Samaveda Upakarma Sraadha Prayogam, Khadira Grihyasutrsam, Samaveda Mantra Ratnakaram etc. Later I came to know that he proof read in his advanced age the books on Samaveda Ashtabraahmanam and Samaveda Samhita Parts I and II in an attempt to publish them. I also had the good fortune of serving him till his end.

Sri Srouthigal had bhakti with total surrender towards Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadhiswaras. He had in his mind Nerur Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra as his Guru.

It is noteworthy that he researched Samaveda Lakshana texts, purged the deficiencies in Riks and Tanas and published Table with pure Lakshanas. He was master in Sroutha karmas (yagas).

3. **Mayavaram Dharmagna Svargiya Ramanatha Srouthigal**
   Brahmasri Ramanatha Srouthigal undertook great pains and published many books on Samaveda through 'Sruti Smriti Itihasa Purana samiti' of Chennai. He practised injunctions of Sastras.
   He was the recipient of the title of Dharmagna and a shawl from Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham Sri Acharyal. He adorned Veda Dharma Sastra Sabha,

Advaita Sabha, Veda Bhashya sabha etc. by serving as Sabha Panditha and examiner.
His immense service to Samaveda is that he collected many palm leaf scripts, consulted many Vidvanas and published the book 'Samaveda Sarvasvam'. In 1976 and 77 I have moved with him closely at Kumbakonam during the sessions of Veda Dharma Sastra Sabha. He was simple and generated enthusiasm in listener by removing doubts then and there.
He received the high national Rashtrapathi Award.
He was in frequent personal contact with Kumbakonam Svargiya Brahmasri Dharmaraja Srouthigal and worked on many subtle aspects and doubts in Samaveda Lakshana.
He is still hailed by Samaveda students for his service of printing and publishing many books. His sons have studied Samaveda under him.

4. **Svargiya Brahmasri Sankaranarayana Srouthigal**
I was in touch with Brahmasri Sankaranarayana Srouthigal from 1980 onwards in Sri Vidyaranya Peetham in Hampi-Hospet in Karnataka. When I served there as per the instructions of Sri Kanchi Acharyal, I studied Veda Bhashya under him. I participated in all scholarly activities including classes on Samaveda Bhashya and Ashtabraahmana and Samhitakakshi. I also looked after administrative work connected with the Peetham Pathasala. In 1975 when Veda Bhavanam was inaugurated in Kolkata, he went there on instructions of Sri Kanchi Acharyal and taught Kothuma Sakha to students. The Pathasala is still running there.
He had good command of Hindi language. He was a great master of Samaveda Bhashya and Lakshana texts. With his sweet voice his Samaganam was very pleasing.
That he published Samaveda Prakriti and Arana Ganas in Nagari script in 1975 through Shashtiabdapoorthi Trust was a great help. Those who were not familiar with Grantha script studied Veda using these books in Nagari script.
He was very devoted to Svargiya Brahmasri Dharmaraja Srouthigal. His brother was also a teacher in Samaveda Pathasala in Tiruvanaikkoil. He was a great soul, who carried out tasks as instructed by Sri Acharyal without bothering about mundane aspects.

5. **Svargiya Pattu Srouthigal alias Brahmasri Subramania Srouthigal**
Brahmasri Pattu Srouthigal had studied Samaveda thoroughly. On the instructions of Sri Kanchi Acharyal he served as teacher of Samaveda in Samaveda Pathasala and also in Prayoga Pathasala in Tiruvidaimarudur (Madhyarjunam) in Srimatham.
He was expert in Prayogas with Aapasthamba and Draahyaayana Sutras. He taught to more than 50 students Yajurveda and Samaveda Prayogas. He enthused students by adopting novel methods of teaching Prayogas.

Many of his students studied entire Samaveda under him. It is noteworthy that for more than 25 years he served the cause of education of Samaveda in Tiruvidaimarudur on instructions of Sri Kanchi Acharyal. I have been in close contact with him also (in my Purvasramam).
He used to enthuse those who have not done Vedic study into Vedic path by explaining the greatness of Vedic study and necessity of learning Prayoga. He practised the injunctions of Sastras.

It is necessary to apprise our disciples of our Veda Guru Parampara by writing detailed books and that alone shows our gratefulness to the Gurus. Our Veda Vidya Guru Parampara has come down uninterruptedly from time immemorial.
As I have moved directly in my Purvasrama with the above mentioned great souls, I have put down their preeminence to some extent as a mark of gratefulness.
I have observed in Kumbakonam many Sastra and Veda Vidvans bathing in Kaveri in Brahma muhurtha chanting Aghamarshana Suktas and coming back with waterpot in raised hand majestically and observing all rules of purity. They used to bring pure clothes for change in a pure cover (madisanji).

When will those times return!
We must admire the fact that they followed all Vedic injunctions strictly and taught Veda to many disciples and placed a lineage of Vedic students on firm footing. Whatever may be the change in times, there is no doubt that with the blessings of Sri Kanchi Acharyal, this Veda Guru-Sishya Parampara will grow from strength to strength.

॥ वेदाः वयं वः शरणं प्रपन्नाः ॥

15. INDEPENDENT SAMAVEDA RIKS

There are a total of 1875 Riks in Kouthuma Sakha in Samaveda. Most of them are in Rigveda too. There are 99 Riks, which occur independently in Samaveda only; they are not there in Rigveda. Their list is given below.

आग्नेयम्	Rik No
1. अग्नेविवस्वदाभर	10
2. आजुहोता	63
3. यदिवीरोअनु	82
4. जातःपरेण	90
5. इत एतौदारुहन्	92
6. राये अग्नेमहेत्वा	93

64.	ईशिहिशक्रः	646
65.	इन्द्रन्धनस्य	647
66.	पूर्वस्ययन्ते	648
67.	प्रभोजनस्य	649
68.	एवाहयेव	650
	उत्तरार्चिके	
69.	इन्द्रजुषस्व	952
70.	इन्द्रजढरम्	953
71.	इन्द्रस्तुराषाणिमित्तः	954
72.	पावमानीस्वस्त्ययनीः	1300
73.	पावमानीर्दधन्तुनः	1301
74.	येन देवाः पवित्रेण	1302
75.	पावमानीस्वस्त्ययनीस्थाभिः	1303
76.	अग्नेविश्वेभिरग्निभिः	1503
77.	प्रसविश्वेभिरग्निभिः	1504
78.	सुमन्मावस्वीरन्ती	1654
79.	सरूपवृषन्ना	1655
80.	नीवशीर्षाणिमृढवम्	1656
81.	ऋत्तावानं वैश्वानरम्	1808
82.	य इदे प्रतिपप्तथे	1809
83.	अग्निः प्रियेषु धामसु	1710
84.	त्वाम्मिच्छवसस्पते	1869
85.	अग्निरिन्द्रायपवते	1825
86.	नमस्सखिभ्यः	1828
87.	युञ्ऋञ्जेवाचम्	1829
88.	गायत्तंतैष्टुभम्	1830
89.	अग्निज्र्योतिः	1831
90.	पुनरूर्जानिवर्तस्व	1832
91.	सहरय्या	1833
92.	अभिवाजी	1843

93. अप्सुरेत: शिशिरये 1844
94. अयं सहस्रापरि 1845
95. असौया सेना मरुत: 1860
96. कङ्कास्सुपर्णा: 1864
97. अमित्रसेनांमघवन् 1865
98. इन्द्रस्यबाह्वस्थाविरौ 1869
99. अन्धा अमित्रा 1871
भवताशीर्षाण:

16. BRAHMAGNANI’S SAMAGANA IN TAITRIYOPANISHAD

भृगु: अनु:

एतत्साम गायन्नास्ते।
हाऽवु हाऽवु हाऽवु॥
अहमन्नमहमन्नमहमन्नम्।
अहमन्नादोउऽहमन्नाद:।
अहँ श्लोककृद श्लोककृद श्लोककृत्
अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋत्ताउस्य।
पूर्वं देवेभ्यो अमृतस्य ना भाइ।
योमा ददाति स इदेव मा ३ ऽऽवा:।
अहमन्नमन्नमदन्तमाउ द्मि।
अहं विश्वं भुवनमश्यभवाम् ।
सुवर्ण ज्योती: । स एवं वेद।
इत्युपनिषत्॥१

Sri Adisankara Bhagavadpadacharya has written in his commentary:

एतत्साम गायन्नास्ते । समत्वादबह्मैव साम
सर्वानिन्यरूपं गायस्शुव्य यन्नात्मैकत्वं
प्रख्यापयं ल्लोकानुग्रहार्थं तद्विज्ञानफल
चातीव कृतार्थत्वं गायन्नस्ते तिष्ठति ॥

Sri Suresvaracharya says in his Vartikam:
सर्वात्मत्वादिमान्ल्लोकान्पश्यन्नात्मतया बुधः ।
एतद्ब्रह्म समं साम गायन्नास्ते कृतार्थतः ।।
Brahmagnani chants Samaganam and feels he has achieved the ultimate state.

Sri Adisankara Bhagavadpadacharya in Bhajagovindam says:
यस्य बह्मणि रमते चित्तं नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव
Brahmagnani is immersed in Bliss.
ऋचो ह यो वेद स वेद देवान्
यजूंषि यो वेद स वेद यज्ञान्
सामानि यो वेद स वेद सर्वम् ।।
Great men say that Brahmagnanai's bliss is equal to Samagana bliss; his singing is Samagana only.

17. SAMAVIDHANAM IN AGNIPURANAM

अग्निपुराणम्
एकषष्ट्यधिकद्विशततमोऽध्याय:
सामविधानम् ।
पुष्कर उवाच
यजुर्व्विधानङ्कथितंवक्ष्ये साम्नां विधानक्म् । संहितां वैष्णवीं जप्त्वा हुत्वा स्यात् सर्व्वकामभाक् ।।
संहितो छान्दसीं साधु जप्त्वा प्रीणाति शङ्करम् ।
स्कान्दीं पैत्र्यां संहितां च जप्त्वा स्यात्तु प्रसादवान् ।।

२६१ अध्याय: सामविधानम्

यत इन्द्र भजामहे हिंसादोषविनाशम् । अवकीर्णीं मुच्यते च अग्निस्तिग्मेति वै जपन् ।।३।।
सर्व्वंपापहरं ज्ञेयं परितोयञ्च तासु च । अविक्रेयं च विक्रीय जपेद्घृतवतीति च ।।४।।
अयानो देव सवितर्ज्ञेयंन्दु:स्वप्ननाशनम् । अबोध्यग्निरिति मन्त्रेण धृतं राम य याविधि ।।५।।
अभ्युक्ष्य घृतशेषेण मेखलावन्ध इष्यते । स्त्रीणां यासां तु गर्भाणि पतन्ति भृगुसत्तम ।।६।।
मणिं जातस्य बालस्य वध्नीयात्तदनन्तरम् । सोमं राजानमेतेन व्याधिभिर्विप्रमुच्यते ।।७।।
सर्पसाम प्रयुञ्जानो नाप्नुयात् सर्पजं भयम् । माद्य त्वा वाद्यतेत्येतद्धुत्वा विप्र: सहस्त्रश:।।८।।

शतावरिमणिंबद्ध्वा नाप्नुयाच्छस्त्रतो भयम् । दीर्घतमसोर्क्क इति हुत्वाऽन्नं प्राप्नुयाद्बहु ।।९।।
स्वमध्यायन्तीति जपन्न म्रियेत पिपासया। त्वमिमा ओषधी ह्येतज्जप्त्वा व्याधिं न वाप्नुयात् ॥१०॥
यथि देवव्रतंजप्त्वा भयेभ्यो विप्रमुच्यते । यदिन्द्रो मुनये त्वेति हुतं सौभाग्यवर्द्धनम् ।।११।।
भगो न चित्र इत्येवं नेत्रयो रञ्जनं हितम् । सौभाग्यवर्द्धनं राम नात्र कार्य्या विचारणा ।।१२।।
जपेदिन्द्रेति वर्गं च तथा सौभग्यवद्धनम् । परि प्रिया हि वः कारिः काभ्यां संश्रावयेत् स्त्रियम् ।।१३।।
सा तंकामयते राम नात्र कार्य्या विचारणा । रथन्तरं वामदेव्यं ब्रह्मवर्च्चसवर्द्धनम् ।।१४।।
प्राशयेद्बालकं नित्यं वचाचूर्णं घृतप्लुतम् । इन्द्रमिदुगथिनं जप्त्वा भवेच्छतिधरस्त्वसौ ।।१५।।
दत्वा रथन्तरंजप्त्वा पुत्रमाप्नोत्यसंशयम् । मयि श्रीरिति मन्त्रोऽयं जप्तव्यः श्रीविवर्द्धनः ।।१६।।
जैरूप्यस्याष्टकं नित्यं प्रयुञ्जानः श्रिय लभेत् । सप्ताष्टकं प्रयुञ्जानः सर्व्वान् कामानवाप्नुयात् ।।१७।।
पध्येषुगोति यो नित्यं सायं प्रातरतन्द्रितः । उगस्थानं यावां कुर्य्यात्तस्य स्युस्ताः सदः गृहे ।। ।।१८।।
घृताक्तंतु यवद्रोणं वात आवातु भेषजम् । अनेन हुत्वा विधिवत् सर्वां मायां व्यपोहति ।। ।।१९।।
पदेयो दासेन तिलान् हुत्वा कार्म्मणकृन्तनम् । अभि त्वा पूर्व्वपीतये वषट्कारसमन्वितम् ।। ।।२०।।
नासकेघ्मसहस्रन्तु हुतं युद्धे जयप्रदम्। हस्त्यश्वपुरुषान् कुर्य्याद् बुधः पिष्टमयान् शुभान्।।।।२१।।
परकीयान्थोद्देश्य प्रधानपुरुषांस्तथा । सुस्विन्नान् पिष्टकवरान् दुरेणोत्कृत्य भागशः।। ।।२२।।
अभि त्वा शूर णोनुमो मन्त्रेणानेन मन्त्रवित् । कृत्वा सर्षपतैलाक्तान् क्रोधेन जुहुयात्ततः।।२३।।
एतत् कृत्वा बुधः कर्म्म संग्रामे जयमाप्नुयात् । गारुडं वामदेव्यञ्च रथन्तरवृहद्रथौ ।।२४।।
सर्व्वपापप्रशमनाः कथिताः संशयं विना ।

इत्यादिमहापुराणे आग्नेये सामविधानं नाम एकषष्ट्यधिक द्विशततमोऽध्यायः

Om Tat Sat

Sankara and Modern Physics

By N. Subramanian

CONTENTS

Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam,
Sharada Peetam, Sringeri - 577 139 (KARNATAKA)

Shri N. Subramanian has submitted his work on "Sankara and Modern Physics" for blessings. To go through such an original study and comparative treatment of Advaita philosophy and well-developed thesis of modem physics is in itself stimulating. Shri Subramanian has done commendable hard work in endeavouring to give a comparative valuation of Sankara Bhagawatpadal's expositions and the assertion of modern physicists. The extensive quotations that the author has made from Bhagawatpadal's writings and those of well-known modern physicists reveal the wide and intensive and earnest study made by the author. What Shri Subramanian has done in this work is something original and His Holiness, Sri Sankaracharya Dakshinamnaya Sri Sarada peetam, feels happy in giving His blessings to this book and to Shri Subramanian and His Holiness expresses the fervent hope that the book will have a large circulation in all circles of philosophers and physicists in this Country as well as many Countries abrond where such comparative studies will attract keen attention. His Holiness is further happy to note the generosity of Shri Subramanian in that he has said the proceeds of this book will go to the Sankara Hall and Sankara Institute of Philosophy and Culture, Calcutta, a unit of Sri Sarada Peetam, Sringeri which is doing valuable work from Calcutta for the propagation and understanding of Sankara Bhagawatpadal's life and writings.

With Narayana Smaranams,

Giridhara Sastry
Private Secretary to His Holiness the Jagadguru
Sri Sankaracharya Dakshinamnaya
Sri Sarada Peetam
Sringeri

Camp: Puri
26-6-1977

FOREWORD

The book is a pioneering attempt at a scientific evaluation of Sankara's philosophy. The tenets of Advaita philosophy are subjected to the rigorous tests of the philosophy of science. Without being unduly biased in favour of Eastern philosophy or Western scientific culture, the author has attempted the comparative study in the spirit of the ancient seekers of truth and the modern research scientist. With copious citations from Sankara's writings and the writings of modern physicists, the author has attempted a comparative evaluation of the basic points of agreement between the two schools of thought, separated in space and time and has discovered a unity between the two. It is a book which reveals the deep interest of the author and his keen sense of the fundamental unity behind the divisions of time, space and consciousness and his earnest desire to understand the forces currently influencing the people's life.

The author has analysed fundamental questions of philosophy, ethics and higher understanding of basic concepts of life and drawn out solutions that will impress enlightened minds.

In a short span of about 100 pages the author has discussed problems of great significance. The arrangement of matter is logical, starting from what we see going on to what we think we see and what makes us see and finally to the identification of the seer and the seen and the entire universe into one. The book is in the best traditions of our culture and shows evidence of the vitality and inquisitiveness which characterised our thinking in the past and which show a way to developments in the future. We commend the book to all students of science, to all students and savants of philosophy and culture and to all those who seek truth and understanding.

The intense effort put in by the author with commendable devotion needs appreciation on all hands and we are happy that we are able to bring out this publication of enduring value under the auspices of Sankara Hall and Sankara Institute of Philosophy and Culture. If, as the author has expressed in his introduction, the book creates a desire in the mind of the reader to make a deeper study of the subject, the author's hard work and the publisher's objective in regard to the publication will be more than amply rewarded.

We also gratefully acknowledge the author's gesture in donating the sale proceeds of the book to Sankara Hall and Sankara Institute of Philosophy and Culture.

P. Subrahmaniam
President
Committee of Management Sankara Hall and Sankara Institute of Philosophy and Culture
Sringeri Sri Sarada Peetam Sankara Hall
93 Southern Avenue
Calcutta - 29
26th June, 1977

PREFACE

"When we view ourselves in space and time our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle picture, but when we pass beyond space and time they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life. The phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existences in space and time while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may all be members of one body". These sentences from the book "Physics and Philosophy", by Sir James Jeans form the point source for this book. In the same book Sir James Jeans raises the following questions also. "Are we for instance automata or are we free agents capable of influencing the course of events by our volition? Is the world immaterial or material in its ultimate nature, or is it both? If so, is matter or mind the more fundamental? Is mind a creation of matter, or matter a creation of mind? Is the world we perceive in space and time the world of ultimate reality, or is it only a curtain veiling the deeper reality beyond?

2. These questions have agitated the minds of the Indian philosophers for the past several centuries. There have been discussions and counter discussions on these questions. Thanks to the acquaintance in early life with many learned pundits, I have been myself asking these questions may be in different form. Learned scholars have been discussing these questions and giving answers or partial answers from the Hindu Scriptures and Philosophical treatises. I have been fortunate to attend many of these discourses, but these took place so long ago and too early in my life when I could not pursue these questions for a more detailed and concentrated study. But the background was there in my mind which was occupied by these questions.

3. When later on in life I turned to the books on modern physics and the philosophical implications of the developments, I could recapture and recollect the points discussed in the Hindu Philosophical treatises. There is a lot of similarity between, the thoughts and declaration of idealist physicists like Sir James Jeans, Arthur Eddington and the idealist philosophers of the East like Sri Sankara, Vidyaranya and others. Some of these sentences from the books of the idealist physicists almost recall the identical sentences found in the Upanishads and the Advaita treatises of Sri Sankara. For Eg., "all matters as originally understood is an illusion, nothing exists in reality except mind". Again the assertion, "that methods of physics cannot reveal absolute truth or even fragments of absolute truth, concedes the main point that knowledge obtained by them is absolutely subjective". These two are essentially the tenets of Sri Sankara's philosophy of the idealistic universe. "Again the recognition that philosophical knowledge is structural knowledge abolishes all dualism of

consciousness and matter. Dualism is based on the belief that we find in the external world something of a nature incommensurable with what we find in consciousness. But all that physical science reveals to us in the external world is group structure and group structure is also found in consciousness". This almost tallies with the view of Sri Sankara that the essential nature of the world is the same as appearing to consciousness both in dream and reality. It is only the difference in the nature of consciousness that makes the difference in the degree of reality.

4. "There is no reality different in kind from that we associate with a mere mental concept. The mental concepts are the pure thoughts of a thinker. We have reduced the whole of nature to a mental concept". These sentences uphold the concept of Sri Sankara that the phenomenal world is only an idea in the super mind and is real only to that extent. In the sentence, "matter as originally understood, the matter of solid objects and hard particles, has no existence in reality and only appears to exist through our observing non material things in a confused way through the bias of our human spectacles" is an echo of the Maya Vada of Sri Sankara.

5. The above will show that the idealists among the modem physicists hold almost similar beliefs as the ancients held. In fact the developments in modem times in modern physics and the philosophical implications of the theories bear a close resemblance to the speculations and declarations found in the Upanishads. What the present day physicists have found by observation, experimentation and inference, the ancients were able to intuitively infer from mere thought processes. In fact idealists have declared that all fundamental laws of physics which operate in the world can be deduced from purely epistemological considerations.

6. Though there are many fields of developments in modem physics, the principles which have considerable philosophical implications are in the field of micro physics and macro physics. The classical laws of physics propounded by Newton, Kelvin and Kepler, still continue to govern the ordinary levels of day to day experience. The following principles of modem physics among others have very deep philosophical implications:

1. Hiesenberg's uncertainity principle
This principle states that the position and velocity of an electron cannot be observed simultaneously and accurately at any particular point of time.
2. Pauli's exclusion principle:
This principle states that no two electrons in the outer orbit of an atom can occupy the same level of energy or the same orbit at any particular point of time.
3. Mach's universal principle:

This principle states that the position and velocity of a particle in the universe is dependent on the position and velocity of the other particles in the universe.

4. Bohr's principle of complementarity:

This principle states that a rigorous causal sequence for individual processes cannot be realised simultaneously, the one or the other must be sacrificed. In fact later on Mr. Bohr extended this principle to other similar concepts which are complementary in nature.

5. The principle of the constancy of the velocity of light: This is one of the aspects of Einstein's theory of relativity. It states that velocity of light is the same to all observers in the universe irrespective of his position or motion in the universe.

6. Planck's quantum theory itself, which states that energy or action takes place or is transmitted in small finite quantities and not by a continuous process.

7. There are other principles and concepts in the developments in modem physics which have deep philosophical implications. But making a list of these principles will serve no purpose. When the fundamental questions are discussed, the relevant principles or ideas in modem physics will be touched upon.

8. The structure of the atom has now been explored and the most common and elementary view is that the atom consists of a hard core with a positive charge of electricity with some loose electrons orbiting it and carrying a negative charge of electricity. There are two views about the status of these free electrons. Observation and study have led to the inference that the behaviour of this free electron is far too much complicated. There is a 'spin about its own axis which cannot be accounted for. The spectral effects of this electron cannot also be accounted for. Sometimes the electron jumps from one orbit to another without any apparent reason. The orbit of its revolution around the nucleus cannot also be accurately traced. The presence of the negative charge in the electron combined with the positive charge residing in the nucleus, operates against the stability of the atom. Therefore, many adjustments and modifications have been made to the fundamentals of this theory in attempts to account for the stability of the atom. In some such attempts, particles of antimatter have been advocated. The last word has not yet been said on the structure of the atom. Physicists themselves are divided into two groups according to their view of the electron as a material particle and they explain some of the phenomena on the basis that the electron is a material particle. The other physicists like Schrödinger view the electron as having a wave pattern and they explain some of the other phenomena observed. Thus loosely it may be stated that the electron behaves as a particle sometimes and as a packet of waves at other times.

In a way of saying, it is sometimes stated that the electron is a particle on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is a group of waves on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The electron is not known on Sundays because it is a day when the Lord takes rest. These are some of the problems and ideas found in the field of microphysics.

9. Similar questions in the area of macrophysics are the concepts of expanding universe, the origins of creation and other such topics. The theory of motion of galaxies, the speed of recession of the stars and the theories of stability of the universe raise many questions about creation, sustenance and destruction of the phenomenal universe. The nature of the concept of time and of biological processes such as ageing, birth and death are also to be considered. In this context the theories of Hoyle, Eddington are significant. The theory of expanding universe, the steady state theory, the bang theory of creation will all be considered in the relevant places in the text.

10. These developments and ideas in physics have implications on the following five questions of philosophy:

1. The nature of the world and the relation of the phenomenal world to the observer.
2. The nature of knowledge and the source of knowledge.
3. The role of causality and determinism in the universe,
4. The relationship between the subject and the object.
5. The nature of the absolute.

These will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this book.

11. Though there is a lot of similarity between the views of our ancient philosophers and the philosophical implications of the principles mentioned above, it may be pointed out that it is the Advaita philosophy expounded by Sri Sankara that comes close to the recent, developments of physics. In modem physics the principles can be stated in precise terms and more or less understood by those who have had training in appreciating the terms and concepts involved. But the principles of Sankara's philosophy cannot be stated in such compact language. They have to be gathered by a study of the large volume of his writings and treatises. 1 must confess 1 have not made a detailed study of all his writings. But I have tried to gather the relevant portions from his writings which will serve our purpose of a comparative study. This is done with the hope that before long there will be reconciliation between the scientific philosophy of the West and the speculative philosophy of the East.

12. Having outlined the scope of the latter chapters of this book, I must now attempt to answer the question, why this book? Some of the science scholars who have a good training in science and who also have some

acquaintance with philosophy have frequently stated that both in science and philosophy there is a concept that an iron law holds over the world. In the Eastern philosophy it is known as the law of "karma", or in other words the principle of Fate. In Western science it is known as the principle of determinism. The first principle states that man is a result of past actions. What he enjoys today is a result of his past karma and what he does today is further performance of karma which will lead to further action. In other words, what he does now is a result of past action and will also determine his future. Therefore, he is in a prison (whether of his own making or of God's will, which, we do not know) and he has no means of escape. If that is so, why philosophy and why science? Why ethics and restraint? Why not freedom to act as the mind and instincts tell you to do and either enjoy the consequences now or in the future as and when they come. Correspondingly, the scientific principle of determinism also states that all of man's action is controlled by his environment or the operation of forces beyond his control. He is at the mercy of either internal or external forces. He has no choice in the matter of actions. Everyone does according to his past upbringing or background and will enjoy what his actions decide for him. Freedom of action is a myth and therefore do as your instincts tell you and take the consequences when they come.

13. This line of argument also serves as a defence to the libertine and to the indolent. It supports the evil and the sadist. It also robs life of all purpose and meaning. There is no direction in life. There is no encouragement to the good, to the gentle and to the pious. It sets at naught all the exhortations of the Ten Commandments and the imperatives of the Upanishads like Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara, Ahimsa Paramo Dharma etc. This line of argument among the youth has given rise to movements like escapism, rejection of social constraints and others. There is no moral, social, or ethical basis for the conventions of society. Each one as he pleases instead of as he wills becomes the rule and the motivating force. Restraint and control lose all meaning and thus humanity is slowly being led to chaos.

14. The leading scientists both in the field of pure science and applied science do not discuss these problems in their treatises except for some of the idealist physicists whom I have mentioned above. This is probably because they are not trained to discuss these fundamental questions of life and find the answers for the same. Perhaps they feel they are incompetent to discuss such questions. They think that these questions do not belong to the culture of science. The philosophers who can and do discuss these questions do not command the same authority as the scientists, because the philosophers are dismissed as armchair speculators who are not actively involved in the world and whose views cannot form a basis for day to day conduct in this strife torn world. There

are very few scientists who have studied philosophy and there are fewer philosophers who have studied science. There will be less who have studied modem physics and Eastern philosophy. Though I cannot claim to have made any detailed study of modem physics or of Eastern philosophy, I have some acquaintance with both these subjects and have made as far as practicable the study of these two streams of thought.

15. But the doctrine of free will and freedom of action does not answer some other questions like the inequality in the status of men and the squalor obtaining in real life. We also see frequently that goodness and honesty, decency and morality are not rewarded. We see only the dishonest and the impure thriving in life. There is a fundamental dilemma. It is not easy to give a solution or convincing argument in favour of either theory. But the truly scientific spirit requires that we must understand and appreciate the evidence available in favour of either theory. It is not proper to expect a ready and acceptable solution. The limitations of science and philosophy should be understood.

16. Though these ideas have been in mind for some years, they could not find expression until recently when there was a talk under the auspices of the C. P. Ramaswamy lyer Foundation in January, 1974. Some of the persons who attended the talk made a request that the ideas may be expanded and may be published in the form of a book. This gives the background and the genesis for this endeavour.

17. If the thoughts expressed and discussed here lead to a further attempt at a deeper study of the points raised, both by the scientists of the West and the philosophers of the East, I would consider my efforts amply rewarded. It is in this spirit of service to the aspirants and earnestness of the student of philosophy, that I place this book at the hands of the readers.

NATURE OF THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

According to Sri Sankara the phenomenal universe has no substance. The impression of the universe which we get is through the five senses of perception and it is recognised by consciousness with the help of the mind. He says that the subjective impressions which we get are the only realities. Objects in themselves are not known to us and cannot be comprehended by the human being. This version of Sri Sankara's explanation of the phenomenal universe is sometimes misinterpreted. It is stated that according to Sri Sankara the whole world is an illusion and a myth. Since this clashed with our day today experience, it is stated, that Sri Sankara is too obtuse, and his theory is not based on reality or on

experience. This interpretation of Sri Sankara's Mayavada is based on a misconception of his philosophy. Perhaps, the professional interpreters of Sri Sankara's philosophy have erred in stressing on this aspect of the phenomenal universe.

When we compare Sri Sankara's views about the unreality of the objective universe with the advanced theories of modern physics, we find striking resemblances. The comparison may therefore start with the nature of the phenomenal universe according to Sri Sankara and according to the latest developments in modem physics.

According to Sri Sankara the true nature of things is to be known personally through the eye of clear illumination and not through a sage. What the moon exactly is, is to be known with one's own eyes, can others make him know it? (V.C. 54).

वस्तुस्वरूपं स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा

स्वेनैव वेद्यं न तु पण्डितेन।

चन्द्रस्वरूपं निजचक्षुषैव

ज्ञातव्यमन्यैः अवगम्यते किम्॥ वि॥चू॥ ५४॥

The universe does not exist apart from the sense perception and the perception of its separateness is false like the quality of blueness in the sky. Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from its substratum? It is the substratum which appears like that through delusion. (V.C. 235).

अतः पृथङ् नास्ति जगत्परात्मनः

पृथक् प्रतीतिस्तु मृषा गुणादिवत्।

आरोपितस्यास्ति किमर्थवत्ता

अधिष्ठानमाभ्नाति तथा भ्रमेण॥ वि॥चू॥ २३५॥

What Sri Sankara says here is that the sky which is perceived as blue is not really blue in its nature. The blueness of the sky appears to the observer. He, therefore, argues that the blueness of the sky has no meaning or existence apart from the substratum viz. the atmosphere.

Another favourite analogy of Sri Sankara is that of clay or of ether. All modifications of clay such as a jar, which are always accepted by the mind as real are nothing but clay.

मृत्कार्यं सकलं घतादि सततं। मृन्मात्रमेवाहितं

स्तद्वत्सज्जनितं सदात्मकम् इदं सन्मात्रमेवाखिलम्।

यस्मात् नास्ति सतः परं किमपि तत्सत्यं स आत्मा स्वयं

तस्मात् तत्त्वमसि प्रशान्तं अमलं ब्रह्माद्वयं यत्परम्॥ वि ॥चू॥ २५१॥

घटकलश कुसूलसूचि मुख्यैः

गगनमुपाधिशतैः विमुक्तमेकम्।

भ्रवति न विविधं तथैव शुद्धं

परमहमादि विमुक्तमेकमेव॥ वि ॥चू॥ ३८७॥

Akasha divested of the hundreds of limited adjuncts such as a jar, a pitcher, a receptacle for grains, or a needle is one and not diverse (V.C. 251 and 385).

मृदादिकारणं नित्यं त्रिषु कालेषु दर्शनात्।

घटाद्यनित्यं तत्कार्यं यतस्तन्नाश ईक्ष्यते॥ स॥वे॥सा॥सं॥ १७॥

None of the objects that are made of clay such as pots, and jugs is eternal, for they perish and cease to be. But the clay remains at all times. (S.V.S. I7)

Perceptions arise as a result of consciousness only. But there being different kinds of perceptions (like sound, colour etc.) these must have some external existence apart from consciousness. Since these changes themselves are felt by consciousness it, itself, must be changeable. Since consciousness itself perceives and recognises the differences it must be changeless: otherwise, the differences themselves will not be be cognised by a changing entity. Just as a rope snake, the water in a mirage and such other things are found to be non-existent except only as the knowledge by which they are known, so the duality experienced during the waking and dream has reasonably no existence except as the knowledge by which it is known.

Here Sri Sankara means to convey that according to some of the observers, phenomena have no real existence but as long as phenomena are observed as appearing to be real we apply all the tests of reality. He applies this principle to everyday experience also. Thus, Sri Sankara propounds his doctrine of superimposition. There is a basic substance which constitutes phenomenal universe. But on this basic substance, which is common and which is universal each percipient puts on a gloss and imagines the Mea of the phenomenal universe. But a thing in itself can be known to the mind only through the doors of perception. The theories as to the understanding of the universe also vary. The perception of the individual also varies from time to

time and varies with the different levels of consciousness, perceptions and appreciation. Basically, the nature of these perceptions is the same. There is no reason to attribute different degrees of realities to the different levels of observations and perceptions. The waking state is as good or as realistic as dream state and the super conscious state.

Let us now examine the theories of cognisance or how things manifest to the observer.

पञ्चेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरेव होतृभिः

प्रचीयमानो विषयाज्यधारया।

जाज्वल्यमानो बहुवासनेन्धनैः

मनोमयाग्निः दहति प्रपञ्चम्॥ वि ॥चू॥ १६८

Here Sri Sankara says that observation or perception is itself a Yagna or a sacrifice (V. C. 168). He says that the mental sheath is the sacrificial fire which fed with the fuel of numerous desires by the five sense organs which serve as priests and set ablaze by, sense objects, brings about this phenomenal universe.

एषाऽऽवृतिर्नाम तमोगुणस्य

शक्तिर्यया वस्त्ववभासते अन्यथा।

सैषा निदानं पुरुषस्य संसृतेः

विक्षेपशक्तेः प्रसरस्य हेतुः॥ वि ॥चू॥ ११३॥

It is the veiling power or the power of Tamas which makes things appear other than what they are. But for delusion, there can be no connection of the self which is unattached, beyond activity and formless with the objective world.

भ्रान्तिं विना त्वसङ्गस्य निष्क्रियस्य निराकृतेः।

न घटेतार्थ सम्बन्धो नभसो नीलतादिवत॥ वि ॥चू॥ १६५॥

As in the case of blueness etc. with reference to sky, it is the mind that produces all the sense objects.

निद्राकल्पितदेशकाल विषयज्ञात्रादि सर्वं यथा

मिथ्या तद्वदिहापि जाग्रति जगत्स्वाज्ञातकार्यत्वतः।

यस्मादेवमिदं शरीरकरण प्राणाहमाद्यप्यसत्

तस्मात्तत्त्वमसि प्रशान्तममलं ब्रह्माद्वयं यत्तरम्॥ वि ॥चू॥ २५२॥

As the place, time, objects known etc. called up in dream are all unreal so also the world experienced here in the waking state, for it is all an effect of one's own ignorance.

यत्र भ्रान्त्या कल्पितं तद्विवेके

तत्तन्मात्रं नैव तस्माद्विभिन्नम्।

स्वप्ने नष्टं स्वप्नविश्यं विचित्रं

स्वस्मद्भिन्नं किन्तु दृष्टं प्रबोधे॥ वि ॥चू॥ २५३॥

What is erroneously supposed to exist in something is, when the truth about it has been known, nothing but that substratum and not at all different from it. The diversified dream universe (appears and) passes away in the dream itself. Does it appear on waking as something different from one's own self? On waking the external and internal universes, are now perceived to vanish.

समाहितायां सति चित्तवृत्तौ

परात्मनि ब्रह्माणि निर्विकल्पे।

न दृश्यते कश्चिदयं विकल्पः

प्रजल्पमात्रः परिशिष्यते ततः॥ वि ॥चू॥ ३६६॥

When the mind functions are merged in the absolute, none of this, the phenomenal world is seen.

चित्तमूलो विकल्पोऽयं चित्ताभावे न कश्चन।

अतश्चित्तं समाधेहि प्रत्यग्रूपे परात्मनि॥ वि ॥चू॥ ४०७॥

This apparent universe has its root in the mind and never persists after the mind is annihilated.

आरोपितं नाश्रयदूषकं भवेत्

कदापि मूढैः अतिदोषदूषितैः।

नार्द्रीकरोत्यूषरभूमिभागं

मरीचिकावारि महाप्रवाहः॥ वि ॥चू॥ ४६८॥

That which is superimposed by the grossly ignorant can never taint the substratum. The great rush of waters observed in a mirage never wets the desert tracts.

बुद्धौ दृश्यं भवेत् बुद्धौ सत्या नास्ति विपर्यये।

द्रष्टा यस्मात्सदा द्रष्टा तस्मात् द्वैतं न विद्यते॥

Objects of knowledge exist in the intellect as long as it is there but they do not exist in the opposite case. The knower is always the knower. Duality therefore has no existence. Rest and motion are in the intellect.

भेदस्तु उपाधि निमित्तो मिथ्याज्ञान

कल्पितो न पारामर्थिकः॥ ब्र॥सू॥भा॥ ी वि १०॥

Difference is caused by adjuncts is posited by false knowledge and is not absolutely real.

यथा च प्रसारित पुण्यापणगृह प्रसाद श्री पुंजनपदव्यवहारा

कीर्णमिव गन्धर्वनगरं दृश्यमानमेव सत् अकस्मादभावतां

गतं दृष्टम्। यथा च स्वप्नमाये दृष्टे असद्रूपे। तथा विश्वमिदं

द्वैतमसद दृष्टम्॥ मा॥का॥भा॥ ीं ३॥

As dream and illusions are observed to be unreal, even so all this universe of duality in its entirety is seen to be unreal.

Sri Sankara then discusses the three levels of consciousness viz. Dream state, Waking state and super conscious state. According to him, perceptions in these three states are basically same. Only the level of consciousness and level of appreciation varies.

अविद्या प्रभवं सर्वस सत्तस्मादिदं जगत्।

तद्रता दृश्यते यस्मात् सुषुप्ते न च गृह्यते॥

स्वप्नो भवत्यस्य विभक्त्यवस्था

स्वमात्रशेषेण विभाति यत्र।

स्वप्ने तु बुद्धिः स्वयमेव जाग्र

त्कालीननानाविधवासनाभिः॥ वि॥चू॥ ६८॥

The dream state is a state distinct from the waking state where it shines by itself. In dreams Buddhi by itself takes on the role of the agent and the like, owing to various latent impressions of the waking state.

कर्त्रादिभावं प्रतिपद्य राजते

यत्र स्वयं भातिह्ययं परात्मा।

धीमात्रकोपाधिरशेषसाक्षी

न लिप्यते तत्कृतकर्मलेशैः।

यस्मादसङ्गस्तत एव कर्मभिर्न

लिप्यते किञ्चिदुपाधिना कृतैः॥ वि ॥चू॥ ६६॥

In dreams when there is no actual contact with the external world, the mind alone creates the whole universe. Similarly in the Waking state also all this phenomenal universe is the projection of the mind.

अयो अग्नियोगादिव सत्समन्वया

न्मात्रादिरूपेण विजृम्भते धीः।

तत्कार्यमेतद्द्वितयं यतो मृषा

दृष्टं भ्रमस्वप्नमनोरथेषु॥ वि ॥चू॥ ३४६॥

ततो विकाराः प्रकृतेरहंमुखा

देहावसाना विषयाश्च सर्वे।

क्षणे अन्यथा भावितया ह्यमीषा

मसत्त्वमात्मा तु कदापि नान्यथा॥ वि ॥चू॥ ३५॥

Like Iron manifesting as sparks through contact with fire, the Buddhi manifests itself as Knower and known through the inherence of Brahman. As these two (knower and known) the effects of the Buddhi are observed to be unreal in the case of delusion, dream and fancy; similarly the modifications of the different Prakrithi from egoism down to the body and sense objects are unreal.

निद्रासूतशरीरधर्मसुखदुःखादिप्रपञ्चोऽपि वा

जीवशादिभिदाऽपि वा न च ऋतं कर्तुं कश्चित् शक्यते।

मायाकल्पितदेशकालजगदीशादिभ्रमस्तादृशः

को भेदोऽस्त्यनयोः द्वयोस्तु कतमः सत्योऽन्यतः को भवेत्॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं॥ ७६४॥

In the dream state one feels with body and experiences peculiar pleasures and pains. But none of these can make the dream real. In the same way, the

delusion of time and space of the universe and Ishwara which are the products of Maya should be deemed to be unreal. In as much as waking and dreaming are correlative, if one of them is unreal what is the guarantee that the other is also not unreal. (S. 764).

न स्वप्नजागरणयोः उभयोः विशेषः

संदृश्यते क्वचिदपि भ्रमजैः विकल्पैः ।

यदृष्ट दर्शनमुखैरत एव मिथ्या

स्वप्नो यथा ननु तथैव हि जागरोपि ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७६५ ॥

Both waking and dreaming are subject to the illusion that intellect imposes on us. In this respect, there is no difference between them. In both these levels of consciousness, there is the triple distinction among the knower, the known and the means of knowledge. The waking moment is also as unreal as dream.

अविद्याकार्यतःतुल्यौ द्वावपि स्वप्नजागरौ ।

द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यादि कल्पनोभयतः समा ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७६६ ॥

Both these levels of consciousness are the products of our ignorance. In both these states of awareness, the triple distinction among the seer, the seen and process of seeing should be regarded as being unreal.

अभाव उभयोः सुप्तौ सर्वैः अपि अनुभूयते ।

न कश्चित् अनयोः भेदः तस्मात् मिथ्यात्म अर्हतः ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७६७ ॥

In deep sleep both the waking and dreaming cease to exist. Both these levels of consciousness should be regarded as unreal.

Unperceived in deep sleep but perceived (in waking and dream) by those only who are ignorant, the whole of this universe is an outcome of ignorance and therefore is unreal.

Man's experience is distinguishable into three states. Waking (Jagrat), dream (Swapna) and deep sleep (Sushupthi). In dream, he creates an inner world of images and imagines that he is a denizen thereof. In sleep, the sense of plurality is lost and there is awareness without awareness of anything. Waking is only a segment of experience. As dream and illusions are observed to be unreal even so all this universe of duality in its entirety is seen to be unreal.

Sri Sankara says that there is a basic reality and the phenomenal world is an abstraction from this basic reality according to each observer's predilections, make up and capacity of abstraction. In V.C. 135, he says "The supreme self different from the Prakrithi and its modifications, of the essence of pure knowledge and Absolute directly manifests this entire gross and subtle universe in the waking and other states as the substratum of the persistent sense of egoism and manifests it as the witness of Buddhi, the determinate faculty.

प्रकृतिविकृतिभिन्नः शुद्धबोधस्वभावः

सदसदिदमशेषं भासयन्निर्विशेषः।

विलसति परमात्मा जाग्रदादिष्ववस्थाभ

स्वहमहमिति साक्षात्साक्षिरूपेण बद्धेः॥ वि ॥चू॥ १३५॥

Upon the evidence of visual perception, people say 'This is a jar'. But when we examine it, we find there is no jar. For all that there is, is a form of clay.

घटोऽयमित्यत्र घटाभिधानः

प्रत्यक्षतः कश्चिदुदेति दृष्टेः।

विचार्यमाणे स तु नास्ति तत्र

मृदस्ति तद्भावविलक्षणा सा॥ स॥वे॥सा॥सं॥ २८७॥

Again and again Sri Sankara refers to this analogy of the basic substance viz. clay taking its forms according to the capacity of the maker and use to which the person wants to put it.

Owing to its connection, with the superimpositions, the supreme self even though naturally perfect and eternally unchanging assumes the qualities of the superimpositions and appears to act just as they do like the changeless fire assuming the modifications of the iron which it turns red hot.

उपाधिसंबन्धवशात्परात्मा

ह्युपाधि धर्माननुभाति तद्गुणः।

अयोविकारानविकारिवह्निव

त्सदैकरूपोऽपि परःस्वभावात्॥ वि॥चू॥ २६२॥

Neither this gross, nor this subtle universe is the Atman. Being imagined they are unreal like the snake seen in the rope and like dreams. Perfectly eliminating the objective world in this way by means of reasoning, one should next realise the oneness that underlies Eswara and the Jiva.

नेदं नेदं कल्पितत्वान्न सत्यं

रज्जुदृष्टव्यालवत्स्वप्नवच्च ।

इत्थं दृश्यं साधुयुक्त्या व्यपोह्य

ज्ञेयः पश्चादेक श्चावस्तयोर्यः ॥ वि ॥चू ॥ २४६ ॥

The disc of the sun is caught between the forefinger and thumb. But the dimensions of the sun are million times this. What is perceived by the senses cannot be said to be final.

तिष्ठत्येव स्वरूपेण न तु शून्यायते जगत्

क्वचित् अंकुररूपेण क्वचित् बीजात्मना वटः ।

कार्यकारणरूपेण यथा तिष्ठत्यदस्तथा ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ५८७ ॥

The universe undoubtedly exists in its own real nature. At no time is it Sunya or the void. Just as a banyan tree is at first a seed and then a sprout, so also this whole universe unfolds itself as the effect of manifestation from that which was the cause of it. In the stage of deep sleep, there are no objects of knowledge and there is no mind to comprehend them.

तद्वद्विषयसांनिध्यादनन्दो यः प्रतीयते ।

बिम्बानन्दां शविस्फुर्तिरेवासौ न जडात्मनाम् ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ६७० ॥

If consciousness is changeless then why are there the states of dream and waking? The mere fact that consciousness is able to differentiate between the two states shows that the substratum is unchangeable. The difference arises only at intervals and not persistent. In deep sleep there is no consciousness of knowledge. There is no argument, there are no objects of knowledge but knowledge itself exists and does not cease to exist.

विशेषणं तु व्यावृत्त्यै भवेतद्द्रव्यान्तरे सति

परमात्माऽद्वितीयोयं प्रपञ्चस्य मृषात्वतः ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ६७४ ॥

Sri Sankara then examines the nature of substratum or the basic matter of the phenomenal universe. All the sensual happiness is in reality nothing more than the reflex happiness of the mind. The insentient objects by themselves cannot confer happiness. 'Every attribute is of value in so far as it distinguishes any one object from another. 'Whatever is an object of knowledge whether it is conscience or the intellect or the gross world around us, whether it is understood mediately or immediately has its basis in ignorance and has no existence, apart from it. That which is supremely real is non-duality. Through Maya it appears as diverse even as the plurality of

moons on account of defective eyesight or the rope appearing differently as snake, water streak etc. In reality the self is partless. Duality which is of the nature of difference is said to exist because it is perceived and is practically useful. Therefore, perception, practicability are not the criteria for the reality of duality.

परोक्षत्वापरोक्षत्वसर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणम्

बुद्ध्यादिस्थूलपर्यन्तमाविद्यकमनात्मकम् ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७५८ ॥

In modem physics the consensus of opinion is that the impressions of the phenomenal world which we get is through our sense perceptions. Though we try to make measurements and codify the working of nature, the laws of physics tell us only about the relationship between the sense impressions which we get about the outside world. Things in themselves are not available to us for direct perception. We will now examine the views of the leading modem physicists.

Sir James Jeans has made a special study of the philosophical implications of the developments in modem physics. He says that our impressions can never step out of the prison house to investigate the real nature of things which inhabit this mysterious world beyond our sense organs. We are acquainted with such things only through messages we receive from them through the windows of our senses and these tell us nothing as to the essential nature of their origin. We can never understand the true nature of reality. Speaking about the quantum mechanics, he says that the quantum mechanics contains a statement of facts in abstract mathematical form whereas the wave mechanics consists of pictorial representation of these facts in which the pictorial details may or may not correspond truly to the realities of nature. In Heisenberg's model the electron dropped altogether. It had to because it exists only as a matter of inference and not of direct observation. For the same reason the new theory contains no mention of atoms, nuclei or protons or of electricity in any shape or form. The existences of these are matters of inference. The p and q of the uncertainty relations ceased to be mere quantities of any kind, each becoming a whole group of quantities.

Radiation cannot be pictured as particles when it is travelling through empty space. Similarly, electron cannot be pictured as, waves when it is travelling through empty space. The electron inside the atoms remains unobserved and unobservable and there is no solid justification for supposing that it resembles the electrons we see or so nearly see outside. The electron is a moving particle. We see that no experiment can fix both its speed of motion and its position in space with complete certainty. High up in the vault of the head inside the brain, the world comes to light. Sensations, perceptions, memories weave their images. In that tiny tenement all experience comes to focus. Is

this moving picture a projection of a real world existing outside or is the picture itself the whole stuff of the world?

The new physics disenchants us as to the firmness and fixedness of substance. The quantum mechanics does not deal with things whose laws we seek to discover, instead from observations we constitute things. Atomic physics deals with the nature and structure not of atoms but of the events which we perceive when observing the atom.

The particle picture is obviously more suitable when radiation is falling on matter and the wave picture when it travels through space. The wave picture and the particle picture do not show two different things but two aspects of the same thing. The space of protons is ordinary physical space while the space traversed by the waves of the undulatory theory is a conceptual space. Indeed it must be since the waves, as we have seen are mere mental constructs and possess no physical existence. John A. Young writes "In some sense we literally create the world we speak about. Our physical science is not simply a set of reports about the outside world. It is also a report about us and our relations to that world whatever the latter may be like".

Physicists themselves have come to recognise this and have found themselves forced to adopt principles as they say of relativity and indeterminacy. The point to grasp is that we cannot speak simply as if there is a world around us of which our senses give information. In trying to speak about what the world is like, we must remember all the time what we see and what we say depends on what we have learnt, we ourselves come into the process. The word 'atom' or 'electron' is not used as the name of a piece. It is used as part of the description of the observation of physicists. It has no meaning except as used by people who know the experiments by which it is revealed.

Heisenberg in speaking about the philosophical problems in nuclear physics says, that if the quantum theory is correct the elemental particles are not real in the same sense as the things in our daily life e.g. trees, stones, etc. They appear as abstractions derived from observed materials which in a literal sense are real. The modem physics in the final analysis has already denied the concept of the truly real. The elementary particles of modem physics are defined by the requirements of mathematical symmetry. They are not eternal and unchanging and they can hardly be therefore strictly termed real. And the mathematical Pattern is in the final analysis an intellectual concept.

D'ABRO, another writer who has codified the latest developments in modern physics says that it is nonsense to accept the theory of relativity on the one hand and to deny the fourth dimension to the world continuum on the other.

Only when we wish to discuss the underlying reality which may manifest itself in one way or other according to the conditions of observation must the impersonal four dimensional conceptions be adopted. We may say that the corpuscular aspect of the electron is brought into existence by our observation of the electron's position. We must suppose that the electron comes into existence as a corpuscle only after an observation has been made. If notwithstanding this fact we erroneously attempt to assign a position to the electron before the observation, we shall be attempting to give meaning to a meaningless concept. The particle aspect and the wave aspect must be viewed as complementary and as exhibiting two different aspects of the same underlying reality according to Bohr.

The waves of Schrödinger's theory are regarded as mere mathematical symbols so that the wave picture cannot claim any physical reality. Ultra violet radiations are in all truth observable only indirectly by the effects they produce and in order to connect the effects actually observed with the invisible ultra violet radiation. The fact that the co-ordinates of the potential energy etc. are now represented by Matrices shows that these magnitudes have lost their original meaning and that a tremendous step has been taken towards increasing abstraction. Practically, all physical magnitudes lose their familiar association, so that we seem to be penetrating into a new world whose abstruseness baffles the imagination. The source of our knowledge of the physical world resides in the sensations of light, heat, sound, touch and the like which we experience directly. In the new quantum theory the observed magnitudes are connected by an elaborate mathematical superstructure of the most abstract type. It can be visualised only when we represent it in a space which has an infinite number of imaginary dimensions.

In the theory of relativity, Einstein says" Geometry sets out from certain conceptions such as 'plane', 'point, 'straight line' with which we are able to associate definite ideas. The concept 'true' does not tally with the assertions of pure

Geometry as it is not concerned with objects of experience. A stone dropped from a moving train appears to fall in a straight line to the passenger in the train. The path appears to be a parabola to the stationary observer. Considered logically the concepts of space, time and event are free creations of human intelligence. The attempt to become conscious of the empirical sources of these fundamental concepts should show to what extent we are actually bound to the concepts. In this way, we become aware of our freedom of which, in case of necessity it is always a difficult matter to make sensible use. There is no such thing as empty space i.e. space without a field. Space time does not claim existence on its own but only as a structural quantity of the field.

De-Broglie says "the wave aspect should also be exhibited by matter. But these waves are not material waves which transfer energy because their velocity is greater than that of light". Continuity and discreteness seem to be the antithesis of each other and appear incompatible. But De-Broglie, by interpreting the discreet stable orbit of Bohr's theory by means of a condition of stability imposed on continuous waves showed that the two opposites could be reconciled. Why indeed should waves of light be regarded as symbolic and photons as real? In any case when we pass to the higher atoms with their several electrons the introduction of the hyper space cannot be avoided. Hyper space is obviously a mathematical fiction.

In Heisenberg's theory the position, the orbit and the motion of electrons in the atom are assumed to be unobservable and so no use is made of such magnitudes in the theory. On the other hand the frequencies, intensities and polarizations of the radiations emitted by the atoms as also energy levels are claimed to be observable.

Dirac's theory of the electron is an abstract mathematical theory which combines wave mechanics and the theory of relativity. Dirac's relativistic wave equations of an electron in an electro magnetic field is compatible with two kinds of solutions those in which the kinetic energy of electron is positive and those in which the kinetic energy is negative. Experiments demonstrated that the atom is stable and that it consists of a nucleus and electrons and that it can emit rays if its state of equilibrium is disturbed. These rays have strictly definite wave length. Bohr's scheme gave no indication about what happens to the electron during the jump or so to say in its flight between the two stationary states. But at some instant it struck him that the electron just never happens to be 'between' stationary states, it simply does not possess such a property. And what was there? There was something that he did not as yet know how to call, but was sure that it should depend only on to where and from where the electron jumps. The point is that we cannot perceive an atomic object directly by means of our five senses. Instead we employ accurate and complicated instruments that have been invented.

The atom does not possess such separated properties. An atomic object is some thing entirely different and not simply the sum of the properties of waves and particles. This 'atomic' something is imperceptible to our five senses but it is real nevertheless. The electron has no definite position within the atom. When we deal with a separate atom we can never be certain where its electron is; where it will be in the next instant and what will happen to the atom as a result. No single word of our speech is capable of accommodating all the diversities and complexities of this concept. We have constructed an image of the atom for ourselves.

Relativity involves an analysis of how measurements depend upon the observer as well as upon what is observed. From relativity emerges a new mechanics in which there are intimate relationships between space and time, mass and energy. Together with special relativity, the wave particle duality is central to an understanding of modem physics. The true nature of 'light' is no longer something that can be visualised in terms of every day experience.

The consequences of uncertainty principle are:
Electron cannot be present within the nucleus. The certainties proclaimed by Newtonian mechanics are illusory. Instead of two sets of physical principles, one for microscopic universe and one for the macroscopic universe, there is only a single set and quantum mechanics represents our best efforts in formulating it. For the sake of convenience, the physicist speaks of just one concept of current. Strictly speaking, Bridgeman believes we should recognise different concepts, each defined by a different operational procedure of measurement. If the customary procedure among Physicists is followed the various concepts of current will be replaced by one concept The concept "electron" is so far removed from simple direct observations that it is best to keep it theoretical, open to modifications by new observations.

SUMMARY:

According to Sankara, there is an objective universe outside of ourselves. But we have no means of observing or of inferring such an existence. We can accept it as a fact on the basis of revelation or on the strength of Sruti or Smriti. The universe which an embodied individual perceives or infers does not represent the reality of the external universe. Our inference and understanding are based on our state of knowledge, of consciousness and of the capacity of perception and understanding and finally on our sense of discrimination between the vital and the insignificant.

In modem physics also the consensus is that the physical laws do not give a description of the universe. Physical laws are devised to explain our understanding of what we see as phenomena. They have sense and meaning only to those who understand the experiments that are to be done to appreciate the concepts and the process involved. Physical laws do not govern the events which we observe but are only our mental constructs employed to explain and convey our understanding of the external universe. Thus it follows that the state of our knowledge of the external universe depends on our capacity to construct mentally the concepts involved. Thus each one is free and at the same time constrained to conform to his understanding of the external universe and no one version can claim to be more real or more objective than another.

NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

While discussing the nature of knowledge available to an observer of the universe, we find striking resemblances between the conclusions to be drawn from the latest developments in physics and the original Advaita theory of the philosophy of Sankara. In many places, Sri Sankara has described the nature of knowledge available to a man and how futile his enquiry into the source of knowledge which resides in the external universe. He says that mere observations will not be enough without the straight forward perceptions. Very often he asked the question whether the knowledge obtained by an observer is within himself or is external to him. While discussing this, we may consider also the Gestalt theory of psychology. It is while discussing the theory of knowledge that Sri Sankara propounded the theory of super-imposition. It is wrong to say that Sri Sankara denies objects in themselves or the existence of an objective universe. What he says in effect is that it is the sense of perception that makes the difference between one observer and another. In this context we may also refer to the theory of relativity which also proclaims this difference according to the position in space and time of different observers.

Sri Sankara's observations with reference to the real knowledge and ignorance relate to the realisation of fundamental truth which we may call Brahman. He says that knowledge of Brahman is intuitive and based on instant perceptions.

In (V. 55). He says that who but one's own self can get rid of the bondage caused by the fetters of ignorance desire, action and like even in a 100 crores of cycles.

अविद्याकामकर्मादिपाशबन्ध विमोचितुम्।

कः शक्नुयाद् विना आत्मानं कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ॥ वि ॥चू॥ ५५॥

Neither by Yoga nor by Sankhya, nor by work, nor by learning but by the realisation of one's own identity with Brahman is liberation possible. (V. 56).

न योगेन न सांख्येन नो न विद्यया।

ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिध्यति नान्यथा॥ वि ॥चू॥ ५६॥

Without causing the objective universe to vanish and without knowing the truth of self, how is one to achieve liberation by the mere utterance of the word 'Brahman'. It would result merely in an effort of speech. (V. 63).

अकृत्वा दृश्यबिलयमज्ञात्वा तत्त्वमात्मनः।

ब्रह्मशब्दैः कुतो मुक्तिः उक्तिमात्रफलैर्नृणाम्॥ वि॥ चू॥ ६३॥

Avidya or Maya called also the undifferentiated is the power of the Lord. It is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effect that it produces. It is Maya or Avidya which brings forth the whole universe. (V. 108) \

अव्यक्तनाम्नी परमेशशक्ति

रनाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा।

कार्यानुमेया सुधियैव माया

यया जगत्सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते॥ वि॥चू॥ १०८॥

Sri Sankara says that the objective knowledge which one presumes, one gets, is the creation of one's own mind. It therefore depends on the state of one's mind, the training which one gets, one's level of perceptions attained by the mind and the intellect.

One, is overpowered by ignorance mistaking a thing for what it is not. It is the mistaking of transitory things as real that constitutes bondage and imperfect knowledge (V. 138).

अतस्मिस्तद्बुद्धिः प्रभवति विमूढस्य तमसा

विवेकाभावाद्वै स्फुरति भुजगे रज्जुधिषणा।

ततोऽनर्थ व्रातो निपतति समादातुरधिक

स्ततो योऽसद्ग्राहः स हि भवति बन्धः शृणुसखे॥ वि॥चू॥ १३८॥

All the defects of knowledge is the evil of superimposition. (V. 179).

अध्यासयोगात्पुरुषस्य संसृति

रध्यासबन्धस्तवमुनैव कल्पितः॥ वि॥चू॥ १७१॥

What is erroneously supposed to exist in something is, when the truth about it has been known, nothing but the substratum and not at all different from it. The diversified dream universe (appears and) passes way in the dream itself. It does not appear on waking as something different from one's own self (V. 253).

यत्र भ्रान्त्या कल्पितं तद्विवेके

तत्तन्मात्रं नैव तस्माद्विभिन्नम्।

स्वप्ने नष्टं स्वप्नविश्वं विचित्रं

स्वस्माद्भिन्नं किन्तु दृष्टं प्रबोधे ॥ वि ॥चू ॥ २५३ ॥

Sri Sankara also raises the question as to how one can deny the existence of the universe of which we infer from our perceptions. He raises the relevant question, "Is not sense perception one of the valid means of the knowledge?" (SVS. 273).

विद्यमानस्य मिथ्यात्वं कथं नु घटते प्रश्नो

प्रत्यक्षं खलु सर्वेषां प्रमाणं प्रस्फुटार्थकम् ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ २७३ ॥

He says that sense perceptions are really valid means of knowledge. But one cannot rely only on the sense perceptions for getting at the truth or the reality of substance of the universe. He says that (SVS. 287) upon the evidence of visual perception, people

घटोऽयमित्यत्र घटाभिधानः

प्रत्यक्षतः कश्चिदुदेति दृष्टेः ।

विचार्यमाणे स तु नास्ति तत्र

मृदस्ति तद्भावविलक्षणा सा ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥स ॥ २८७ ॥

Say 'this is a jar'. But when we examine it we find that there is no jar, for all that there is is a form of clay. What he means is that what is given generally by our senses are only the realisation of the forms of things. It is only the world of Nama and Rupa which is available to the senses but beyond this universe of Nama and Rupa is fundamental reality which knowledge cannot be obtained by sense perceptions. Such knowledge is available only by constant training of the mind and by developing the intuitive perceptive power.

Sri Sankara also develops the theory of different levels of consciousness. The three levels of consciousness are the Dream, or the illusory world, the waking world and the super-conscious world. While he places the first two at par, it is the third level which gives the insight to the real nature of things. In (SVS 766) he says that both the levels of consciousness are the products of our ignorance. In both these states of awareness the triple distinctions among the seer, the seen and the process of seeing should be regarded as being unreal.

अविद्याकार्यतस्तुल्यौ द्वावपि स्वप्नजागरौ ।

द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यादि कल्पनोभयतः समा ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७६६ ॥

Neither by means of mind (SVS. 771) nor by words is the ultimate known.

नैवास्ति काचन भ्रिदा न गुणप्रतीति ।

नों वाक्प्रवृत्तिरपि वा न मनः प्रवृत्तिः ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७७१ ॥

One should turn to Sruthi with the help of reason and ascertain the truth of the Atman. (SVS. 816).

प्रमाणसंशयो यावत्स्वबुद्धेर्न निवर्तते ।

प्रमेयसंशयो यावत्तावत्तु श्रुतियुक्तिभिः ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ८१६ ॥

One should have all one's doubts cleared by means of continuous thinking until one realises the nature of that which is to be proved. The object is the gradual removal of this ignorance.

शनैः तद्विषयमज्ञानं विवर्तियितुं शास्त्र न ।

साध्यसाधनाधिष्ठेदविधत्ते ॥

Unperceived in deep sleep but perceived (in waking and dream) by those only who are ignorant, the whole of this objective universe is the outcome of ignorance and therefore is unreal.

अविद्याप्रभवं सर्वमसत्तस्मादिदं जगत् ।

तद्रता दृश्यते यस्मात् सुषुप्ते न च गृह्यते ॥

While discussing the observations made in Physics and the nature of inference drawn from these observations we also come to the conclusion that the inference which we draw are only attributes of our minds and the training which the physicists receive. The observations and laws of physics do not say anything about the things in themselves. The laws of physics are only laws which our thought processes employ to visualise and explain the observations made by our senses. And this has been achieved by the training given to and understanding between the physicists.

Sir James Jeans says that nothing but mechanical explanation can be satisfying to our minds and such an explanation would be valueless if we attained it. We see that we can never understand the true nature of reality. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality and its true meaning and nature must forever be hidden from us. We find that there is something in reality which does not permit of representation in space and time. Space and time cannot contain the whole of reality but only the messengers from reality to our senses. Questioning our own mind is of no use. Just as questioning nature can tell us truths about nature so also questioning our own minds will tell us only the truths about our own minds. The tools of science are

observation and experiment; the tools of philosophy are discussion and contemplation. The Philosopher tends to think in terms of what the mathematician calls finite differences, whereas the Scientists think in terms of infinitesimals. Past and present no longer have any objective meanings since the four dimensional continuum can no longer be sharply divided into past, present and future. The world lines are merely constructs we draw for ourselves. The space time frame work of the classical mechanics is inadequate for the complete representation of natural phenomena. The so called electric and magnetic forces are not physical realities, they are not even objective, but are subjective mental constructs which we have made for ourselves in our efforts to interpret the waves of the undulatory theory. Energy may be transferred from place to place but the waves and electric and magnetic forces are not part of the mechanism of transfer, they are part simply of our efforts to understand this mechanism and picture it to ourselves. Before man appeared on the scene there were neither waves nor electric nor magnetic forces.

The medieval philosopher Hume writes. 'Our knowledge of the outside world consists entirely of sensations.' We now understand that there are in physics as in other spheres of thought un-askable which is to say meaningless questions. e.g. What is the location of electron when it jumps from one orbit to another? Is the orbit of its destination already determined at the instant of jump? What happens to the radiation if the process is interrupted before the emission of one quantum is completed? Many intuitively obvious notions have turned out to be untenable such as that of a material corpuscle having an individual identity. Nature is much queerer than we can suppose. It does not mean however that nature is capricious or that causality is dead. There can be no talk of a final verdict.

According to Galileo, in medieval system there was always an un-surmountable boundary separating the two realms of truth. There was an immanent and transcendent truth, a human and a divine truth, a truth of reason and a truth of revelation. As soon as we have reached the real truth according to Galileo, the truth of mathematics this artificial fence breaks down. Mathematics is indivisible. Galileo insists that if there is any truth, this truth must be one and indivisible.-Cassirier.

Another writer of modem physics John. J. Young, says that our naive way of talking about a world distinct from man and divisible into pieces of matter enduring in time is not adequate. All that the uncertainty relations convey is that direct measurements cannot furnish a simultaneous knowledge of position and momentum. The wave picture merely symbolises the scheme of probabilities which issues from our more or less vague knowledge of actual conditions. In particular, our Hydrogen Atom must be associated with a single De-Broglie wave in a configuration space of six dimensions. This complication

itself proves the symbolic nature of the waves. The method for obtaining the wave equation is extremely symbolic and appears to have no physical interpretation. It is strange to find that the abstract mathematical scheme founded on such slender clues (Matrix Algebra) should be capable of giving definite answers to physical problems. Here is an instance which shows that the abstract mathematical concept can lead to interpretation of observable phenomena. This mathematical concept can never be attained by any untrained and unperceptive mind.

Owing to the uncertainty principle, the limit of accurate knowledge has already been reached in the quantum theory. Beyond lies a fog of uncertainty due to the peculiarities of nature herself. All that we can know are probabilities. There was a permanent wall in the way of total knowledge, a. wall built by the inherent nature of the universe itself. Here again we find striking echo of Sri Sankara's statement that by merely intellectual arguments and reasoning we can never understand the reality of the world or the nature of Brahman.

The existence of uncertainty need not be a source of humiliation for science. To know the limits of the knowledge is itself an item of knowledge of the first importance. Any truly profound phenomenon of nature cannot be defined uniquely by means of the words of our language and requires at least two mutually exclusive or incompatible complementary concepts to define it. This is the principle of complementary of Neils Bohr. The quantum mechanics is a mathematical scheme which enables the physically measurable characteristics of atomic phenomena to be calculated. The power of science is in its capacity to discover, understand and make use of the laws of nature and not in violating them. Quantum mechanics is a system of formulas, concepts and images that enable the observed properties of atomic objects to be pictured, explained and predicted.

We must suppose that the electron comes into existence as a corpuscle only after an observation has been made i.e. observation is a creation. Each observer is a creator and is a unique one at that. Again, the world is subjective. The world is a reality only if we want it and mind wills it. The uncertainty relations apply to waves as well as particles. The former is a mental concept and the latter a physical concept. Both are equally affected by the uncertainty relations. This shows that the uncertainty relations are a constituent of knowledge itself at the ordinarily level of experience. They affect only knowledge which is subject to occur in pairs viz. position and time, energy and time, action and time. This also shows that only if we have two different concepts like the pairs mentioned above, we come across the uncertainty relations. Once we get over these pairs of opposites and go to the truth directly and intuitively, there are no limits to our knowledge like these

uncertainty relations. This is the truth which has been repeatedly emphasised by Sri Sankara and other philosophers, of Advaita.

Speaking about the duality point of view, of Bohr, we may say that every physical entity be it a light quantum, an electron or any other atomic particle presents two sides of a medal. On one side it can be treated as a particle on the other side as a wave. The reality, he feels can be reached only when we talk about pairs of opposites like pain and joy, hot and cold. As soon as we go over to the symbols of physics, temperature and the like, the reality thins out. This is Riezler's judgement of the nature of the physical laws. The construction of a physical theory is not limited by man's power to visualise, in fact modem physicists had moved steadily away from what can be directly observed and imagined. The total system of physics is no longer required to be such that all parts of its structure can be clearly visualised. If there is an electro magnetic oscillation of a specified frequency, then there is a visible greenish blue colour of certain hue. Here something observable is connected with a non-observable micro process. There is no answer to the question "exactly what is radiation"? Does it reside in the unobservable electro magnetic oscillation? Does it reside in the visual perception of colour or does it reside in the brain of the observer? There is no way a theoretical concept can be defined in terms of observables.

From the above discussion, it appears that Sri Sankara's theory of knowledge compares well with the theories of perception of modem physics. Both the systems agree that all knowledge resides in the observer. If there is no intellect or capacity to draw inference from observations then phenomena have no meaning. It is therefore correct to say that the reality of the external universe has meaning only in the presence of Chitta or the intellect. In the absence of Chitta the inanimate universe has no meaning or existence. Events in the outside world have meaning only when they are cognised by the faculties of man. Then which description of the nature of knowledge is correct? Does knowledge constitute mere perception and the mere recording of what is there outside of us? Or does knowledge reside in the combination of perception, conception and interpretation of events. Oscillations of different wave lengths give rise to different sense perceptions. The meaning and interpretation which an individual cognising entity ascribes to external phenomena vary according to the capacity, training and level of attainment of the individual Chitta. Does this mean that knowledge ultimately resides in ones own Chitta and not outside of one? The representational theory of perception says that what is given to an observer is only a cross section or carving out of external phenomena. The Gestalt theory of perception says that perception occurs when the mind comprehends as a whole what is given to it in fragments. Whatever theory of perception appeals to a person depends on the stage of his development and there is no single theory of perception which is universally applicable. The same holds good for theories

of knowledge also. It is in this sense that it is the observer who creates the objects and that there is no difference between the subject and object and process and cognition. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECT & OBJECT

Sri Sankara was the first philosopher in the East as well as in the West who denied the separate existence of subject and the object. He was the first person who made the bold statement that in the highest reaches of philosophy the distinction between the subject and object is very thin. Very often he raised the question whether the subject who sees and the object which is seen has any inter-relationship or are they completely independent of each other. He also examined the question whether the self can be an object of knowledge and if so, in that case, what is it that the observer is and what is that that was observed. Of course he extended this question of the relationship between the subject and object to the ultimate relationship between the individual self and the world at large.

In V. 183, He says that the mental sheath cannot be the supreme self because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modification and is characterised by pain and suffering and is an object whereas the subject can never be identified with the objects of knowledge.

मनोमयो नापि भवेत् परात्मा ह्याद्यन्तवत्त्वात् परिणामिभावात् ।

दुःखात्मकत्वात् विषयत्वहेतोः द्रष्टा हि दृश्यात्मतया न दृष्टः ॥ वि ॥चू ॥ १८३ ॥

That which is perceived by something else has for its witness the latter. When there is no agent to perceive a thing, we cannot speak of it as having been perceived at all.

तत्साक्षिकं भवेत् तत् तत् यत् यत् येनानुभूयते ।

कस्याप्यननुभूतार्थे साक्षित्वं नोपपद्यते ॥ वि ॥चू ॥ २१५ ॥

In V. 239, He says that the sages realise the supreme truth, Brahman in which there is no, differentiation of knower, knowledge and the known which is infinite, transcendent and the essence of knowledge Absolute.

ज्ञातृज्ञानज्ञेयशून्यमनन्तं निर्विकल्पकम् ।

केवलाखण्डचिन्मात्रं परं तत्त्वं बिदुर्बुधाः ॥ वि ॥ चू ॥ २३६ ॥

Perfect discrimination brought on by direct realisation distinguishes the true nature of the subject from that of the object and breaks the bond of delusion created by Maya.

सम्यग्विवेकः स्फुटबोधजन्यो विभज्य दृग्दृश्यपदार्थतत्त्वम्।

छिनत्ति मायाकृतमोहबन्धं यस्माद्विमुक्तस्य पूनर्न संसृतिः॥ वि॥चू॥ ३४५॥

Like iron manifesting as sparks through contact with fire, the Buddhi manifests itself as knower and known through inherence of Brahman. As these two (knower and the known) effects of Buddhi are observed to me unreal in the case of delusion, dream and fancy, similarly modifications of Prakriti from egoism down to the body and all sense objects are unreal. In the state of deep sleep there are no objects of knowledge and there is no mind to comprehend them.

अयोऽग्नियोगादिव सत्समन्वयान्मात्रादिरूपेण विजृम्भते धीः।

तत्कार्यमेतत्त्रितयं यतो मृषा दृष्टं भ्रमस्वप्नमनोरथेषु॥ वि॥चू॥ ३४१॥

ततो विकाराः प्रकृतेरहंमुखा देहावसाना विषयाश्च सर्वे।

क्षणेऽन्यथाभावितया एष आत्मा नोदेति नाप्येति कदापि नान्यथा॥ वि॥चू॥ ३५॥

Both waking and the dreaming are subject to the illusion that intellect imposes on us. In this respect there is no difference between them. In both these levels of consciousness, there is the triple distinction among the knower, the known and the means of knowledge. The waking moment is also unreal as the dream.

न स्वप्नजागरणयोः उभयोः विशेषः

संदृश्यते क्वचिदपि भ्रमजैः बिकल्पैः।

यत्द्रष्टदर्शनमुखैः अत एव मिथ्या

स्वप्नो यथा ननु तथैव हि जागरोऽपि॥ स॥वे॥सा॥स॥ ७६५॥

Both these levels of consciousness are the products of our ignorance.

अविद्याकार्यतस्तुल्यौ द्वावपि स्वप्नजागरौ

द्रष्टृद्दर्शन दृश्यादिकल्पनोभयतः समा॥ स॥वे॥सा॥स॥ ७६६॥

In both these states of awareness the triple distinction among the seer, seen and the process of seeing should be regarded as being unreal. When ignorance is destroyed, knowledge destroys the effects of ignorance.

कारणाज्ञाननाशात्यत्द्रष्टदर्शनदृश्यता।

न कार्यमस्तित तज्ज्ञानं स्वप्न स्वप्नः समीर्यते॥ स॥वे॥सा॥स॥ ६५१॥

Brahman is an object of knowledge when it is endowed with the attributes of existence, knowledge and bliss. But reality is not an object of knowledge and transcends knowledge.

तद्विद्याविषयं ब्रह्मसत्यज्ञानसुखात्मकम् ।

शान्तं च तदतीतं च परं ब्रह्म तदुच्यते ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥स ॥ ६६६ ॥

The knower is external knowledge only. The knower and knowledge are not different as they are in argumentative philosophy.

नित्योपलब्धिमात्र एवहि उषालब्धा । नतु

तार्किकसमय इव अन्या उप्षलब्धिः अन्य उपलब्धा च ॥

The objects of knowledge exist in the intellect as long as it is there, but they do not exist in the opposite case. In BSB, He says that there is no difference consisting of the object of knowledge the knowing subject and the knowledge process which is a projection of nescience.

बुद्धौ दृश्यं भ्नवेत् बुद्धौ सत्यां नास्तिविषये

द्रष्टायस्मात्सदा द्रष्टा तस्मात द्वैतं न विद्यते ॥

Duality which is of the nature of difference is said to exist because it is perceived and is practically useful. Therefore, perception, practically are not the criteria for the reality of duality.

प्रत्यागत्मत्येन अविषयतया प्रतिपादयत्

अविद्याकल्पित वेद्यभवेदितभवेदतादिभ्नेदभ्न् अपनयति ॥ ब्र ॥ सू ॥ भ्ना ॥ ॥

उपलम्भ्नान्समाचाशत् द्वैतं

भ्नेदरुपमस्ति वस्तु इति उच्यते ।

तस्मात् उपालम्भ्नसमाचारौ द्वैतवस्तु

सद्भावेहेत् भ्नवत् इत्यभ्निप्रायः ॥ मा ॥का ॥भ्ना ॥ ॥

It is amazing that the idealists among the physicists also propound this view that the process of observation affects both the observer and the observed.

Here is what Sir James Jeans writes :

> “The complete objectivity can only be regained by treating observer and the observed as parts of a single system. It now appears that this does not consist of something we perceived but of our perceptions. It is not the object of the subject-object relationship but the relationship itself”.

The waves of electron cannot have any material or real existence, apart from us. They are not constituents of nature but only of our efforts to understand nature. The waves of undulatory theory of light and the waves of wave mechanics are now seen to represent our knowledge about electrons. Both sets of waves are mental constructs of our own; both are abrogated in conceptual spaces.

If the waves of a free electron or photon represent human knowledge, then what happens to the waves when there is no human knowledge to represent? The simple but surprising answer would seem to be that when there is no human knowledge there are no waves. We may always remember that the waves are not a part of nature but of our efforts to understand nature.

The complete closed world consists of three parts, substratum, phenomenal world and the observer. By our experiments we draw up activities from the substratum into the phenomenal world of space and time. But there is no clear line of demarcation between subject and object and by performing observations on the world we alter it. Dirac in his theory introduces operators of an abstract mathematical kind, to represent the effect of dragging an activity up to the surface.

The world is given to me only once and not one existing and one perceived. Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in the physical science, for this barrier does not exist Furthermore, the theoretical possibility of the cognitive act being realised must always be taken into consideration when we wish to gauge the nature of the disturbance generated by a measurement. It is the disturbance generated which is controlled by the uncertainty relations of Heisenberg. The truly isolated system is represented by the entire universe where the observer and his measuring devices are contained within the system. Here the distinction between subject and object becomes confused and so observation is impossible.

Heisenberg in his lectures had also discussed this problem. "The chain of cause and effect could be quantitatively verified only if the whole universe was considered as a single system, but then physics has vanished and only a mathematical scheme remains. The partition of the world into observing and observed systems prevents a smart formulation of the law of cause and effect".

In the classical scheme clear cut separation between subject and object was deemed to be justified. But in modem theory the outside world is deeply affected by the actions of the observer. A clear cut distinction between the knowing subject and the passive object ceases to be possible. In Atomic physics the phenomenon and its observations are inseparable from each

other. Essentially, an 'observation' is also a 'phenomenon' and far from being one of the simplest. The concepts of 'phenomenon' and its 'observation' exist independently only in our minds and even then only with restricted accuracy. Observation destroys the primary phenomenon.

In fact Heisenberg was bold enough to say that all statements in physics are relative to the means of observations used. The Science of quantum mechanics does not deal with things whose laws we seek to discover and instead from observations we constitute the things. Atomic physics deals with the nature and structure not of atoms but of the events which we perceive when observing the atom. Galileo, the medieval physicist insisted that if there is any truth then this truth must be one and indivisible.

John Young, another writer of modern physics thinks on the same lines. He says "our naive way of talking about a world distinct from man and divisible into pieces of matter enduring in time is not adequate. In some sense we literally create the world we speak about. Our physical science is not simply a set of reports about an outside world. It is also a report about us and our relationship to that world whatever the latter may be like. Physicists themselves have come to recognise this and have found themselves forced to adopt principles as they say of relativity and indeterminacy. The point to grasp is that we cannot speak simply as if there is a world around us of which our senses give information. In trying, to speak about what the world is like, we must remember all the time that what we see and what we say depends upon what we have learnt, we ourselves come into the process. The word "atom' or "electron" is not used as the name of a piece; it is used as part of the description of the observations of physicists.

Another writer viz. Harold Schilling says, "The world in which natural science operates is that part of the world that science community has carved out for this particular attention and study that it has extracted or abstracted from the totality of reality and existence and for the exploration of which it has developed special techniques. This world has become far remote from the public domain of everyday life from the world of experience and thought of the common man. According to Prof. Williams, "All knowledge without exception is derived from a critical interpretation of what has come in human experience".

CAUSALITY AND DETERMINISM

The Central problem in philosophy both eastern and western is the problem of causality and determinism. In the medieval ages both eastern and western philosophy accepted the principle of determinism. This principle also ruled the scientific world. Those were the days of classical mechanics of Newton and it

was a period of discovery and inventions. Man found himself limitless and he was flushed with discovering, the explanations for all the workings of nature. Man thought that he had discovered the principles underlying the phenomena of nature. While that was the trend in western philosophy, and culture, in the eastern philosophy also the principle of determinism held sway until the advent of Sri Sankara in the 8th century. In fact, the earlier scriptures were all in favour of determinism though there were occasional dissents from this principle.

The question of causality and determinism is fundamental to philosophy and ethics and in fact rules the conduct of man in all spheres. The doctrines of Karma and transmigration of souls also appeared to favour this principle. In fact, this principle is the central philosophy of Gita. Modernists who have studied Gita superficially raise these questions. Man is a creature of nature. He is bound by his upbringing and the social set up in which he finds himself. All his actions are predetermined because he is merely an instrument to work out the commands of Providence or God by whatever name one calls it. If a man does good according to Providence or God, he also does evil according to the same commands. Therefore, he has no responsibility. Action is neutral towards the question of evil and good. In fact if man is a mere instrument then evil is as much part of man as the good. He cannot become responsible if he does evil action. It is as much part of working out God's will as doing good. If this is so, what is the role of ethics? Why should a man do good actions? What happens to man if he does good or evil? What determines what is the motivation to do a good or to choose between good and evil? What is the role of retribution? These are all the central questions of philosophy which have been asked down the ages and even in the present day. Philosophy as such has no answers, for such questions. Each one has to discover the answers for these questions for himself. In any case, the modem developments in physics have dealt the death blow to the principle of scientific determinism. The strangle hold of the law of determinism or the second law of Thermo Dynamics which held sway two or three centuries ago has been driven away from the scheme of physics. The new theory of expanding universe or oscillating universe has also questioned the principle underlying the theory of evolution, propounded by Darwin. Modem physicists no longer believe in the iron law of nature. Quantum mechanics has questioned the principle of uniformity in natural phenomena.

Sri Sankara also examined the theory of creation, the principle of causality and determinism. In his times, the principles of Karma and transmigration of soul were so much accepted principles of Hindu Religion and philosophy, that he could not dare attack these principles. Therefore, his writings on these questions are not extensive but here and there he has raised these fundamental questions.

He says, "As you who are possessed of consciousness you exist for yourself and are not made to act by any one else. For an independent conscious being is not made to act by another as it is not reasonable that one possessed of consciousness exists for the sake of another possessing consciousness, both being of the same nature like lights of two lamps.

चितिमात्त्वान्न परेण प्रयुज्यसे ।

न हि चितिमान् परतन्त्र परेण प्रयुज्यते ॥

There is no real causation; the world is but an illusory appearance; even as the snake is in the rope". Sri Sankara tackled the question of causality and determinism with his theory of superimposition. According to him nature itself and the observed phenomena are the projection of minds. Once this principle is accepted the question of causality is meaningless. In fact, he says, Vivartha Vada, the theory of phenomenal appearance is against the Parinama Vada, the theory of evolution. The experience of men is because of the conditioning principle of Maya. Since Maya is indeterminable (Anirvachaniya) the question of observation and inference of causality has no meaning. In Mandukya Karika Bhasya he says, those who theorise about creation think that creation is the expression of God.

ईश्वरस्य सृष्टिरिति सृष्टिचिन्तका मन्यन्ते ।

न तु षरमार्थचिन्तकाना सृष्टावादरः ॥ मा ॥का ॥श्चा ॥ ी ॥७ ॥

Those who are intent on the supreme truth, however, do not support the creation.

निष्प्रयोजनायां सृष्टावादर इति ॥ मा ॥का ॥श्चा ॥ ी ॥७ ॥

In another place, he says that the theory of creation is futile. No world either evolving or dissolving exists. If this is so, what about the portions of Vedas regarding the creation etc.

प्रपञ्चः प्रवृत्तो निवृत्तो नास्ति ॥ मा ॥का ॥श्चा ॥ ॥

Sri Sankara says, "The creation texts are not true but only for teaching the oneness of self, one and only source, identity of all objects etc".

तस्मान्न तादर्थ्यं संवादश्रुतीनाम ।

तस्मादुत्युत्त्यादि श्रुतय आत्मैकत्वबुद्ध्यवतारायैव ॥ मा ॥का ॥श्चा ॥ ीीी ॥ १५ ॥

In another place, he raises the central problem of Ethics. He refers to some people saying 'I cannot but make it, I am not independent. I am made to act by someone else'.

नैव भगवन् शक्नोमि न कर्तुम्।

अन्येन केनचित् प्रयुक्तोहं न स्वतन्त्र इति॥

In another place he says, "If it be so, why do the Srutis speak of diverse ends to be obtained their means, and so forth, as also the evolution and dissolution of the world".

यद्येवं भगवन् किमर्थं श्रुत्यासाद्यसाधनादि भेद

उच्यते उत्पत्तिः प्रलयश्चेति॥

Sri Sankara's answers to these questions are given in V. 47. He says it is through ignorance that the one who is Supreme self finds oneself in the bondage of non-self. The fire of knowledge bums the effects of ignorance.

अज्ञानयोगात्परमात्मनस्तव

ह्यनात्मबन्धस्तत एव संसृतिः।

तयोर्विवेकोदितबोधवह्निः

अज्ञानकार्यं प्रदहेत्समूलम्॥ वि॥चू॥ ४७॥

In short, he says that these questions of creation, causality and determinism, questions of ethics etc. are only for the lower levels of advancement in theology. Once a person advances in knowledge, all these questions lose importance, and are no longer fundamental to the problems of philosophy. This is also the finding of modern physics on this vexed question.

It is on discussing this question of causality and determinism that all the writers of modem physics have spent lot of time and thought. Idealist, physicists like James Jeans, Arthur Eddington have tackled this question in their earlier writings. Heisenberg and Schrödinger were asked these specific questions. Einstein was also specifically asked these questions.

According to the law of Rutherford and Soddy atoms of radio active substances broke up spontaneously and not because of any particular conditions or special happenings. We find that the atomicity of radiation destroys the principle of uniformity of nature and the phenomena of nature are no longer governed by a causal law or at least if they are governed the causes lie beyond the series of phenomena as known to us. If we wish to picture the happenings of nature as still governed by causal laws, we must suppose that there is a substratum lying beyond the phenomena and so also beyond our access, in which the happenings in the phenomenal world are somehow determined. The law of causality acquires a meaning for us only if

we have infinitesimals at our disposal with which to observe the system without disturbing it. But this requirement goes against Mach's universal principle. This principle states that the position and velocity of any one particle in this universe, depends on the position and velocity of all other particles in the universe. Also at least one quantum of photon of light is immediately necessary for observing the phenomena. If both these principles are true then we cannot observe the position and velocity of an isolated particle in this universe so that we can follow its movements in space and in time, and so arrive at the causal link. Since these two principles are fundamental to nature and to limits of human observation, the law of causality has no meaning and can neither be proved nor disproved by observation or by laws of physics.

Another theory viz. "the half life period theory" of radio active substances also makes it impossible to locate and identify the particular atom to disintegrate and the mode of disintegration. Einstein supposed that the standing house of cards could not only be knocked down by the impact of radiation but that they could sometimes collapse of themselves in the same way and according to the same laws of atomic nuclei collapse in the radio active disintegration, the rate of collapse being entirely independent of environment and physical conditions. Every atom in the universe is not only liable to spontaneous collapse but also does collapse at frequent intervals. Thus the abdication of determinism appears to be complete, not only from the domain of radio activity but from the whole realm of physics.

On the man-sized scale and indeed far below, nature is to all appearances strictly deterministic. But in the realm of atomic and sub-atomic phenomena the principle of determinism disappears.

Exhaustive studies by many investigators have shown that the fundamental laws of nature do not control the phenomena directly. The laws are our mental constructs said to explain and understand the workings of nature. The substratum activities A, B and C lead to corresponding phenomenal activities a, b, c and also to composite activities AB, BC and AC and have no direct counter parts in the phenomenal world. AB may give rise to a or b but never to both, and there is a definite probability as to whether a or b will appear. After elaborate mathematical discussion Dirac reaches a formal theory of a very complex kind. The matrix mechanics of Heisenberg and the wave mechanics of De-Broglie and Schrödinger are then shown to be included in the theory as special cases. It is an essential feature of Dirac's theory that events in the phenomenal world are not uniquely associated with events in the substratum. Thus uniformity of nature is jettisoned and causality disappears from the world we see. The mathematical equations of both forms of the new quantum theory, the wave mechanics and the matrix mechanics are completely deterministic in form. (This relates to our knowledge of events

but not of events themselves). Causality disappears from the events themselves to reappear in our knowledge of events. But since we can never pass behind our knowledge of events to the events themselves, we can never know whether causality governs the events or not. This is in striking accord with the views of Sri Sankara. According to Sri Sankara also the question of causality and determinism is a subject of controversy only as long as our knowledge is limited. Once we rise above these limitations of knowledge, the question loses its importance.

The central controversy in modem physics is between the particle picture and the wave picture. Both these pictures apply to the electron and the process of radiation. For explaining some phenomena the particle picture is used. For explaining some other phenomena the wave picture is useful. This also explains that the laws of physics are laws which apply to our mental processes to understand and explain the laws of nature. Nature itself is not governed by these laws. Particle picture is indeterminate. The more trustworthy wave picture gives us determinism. The wave picture does not show the future following inexorably from the present but the imperfections of our future knowledge inexorably from the imperfections of our present knowledge.

According to Schrödinger, Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle can be interpreted as a flat denial of causality in the atomic domain. It does not merely state that the causal links at this level are beyond man's power of detection, it clearly implies that the links do not exist. The indeterminacy principle has ostensibly ruled out precisely definable conceptual models. Bohr proposed as a substitute the use of complementary pairs of imprecisely defined concepts viz. position and momentum, wave and particle and so on. Schrödinger raises these fundamental questions. What is determinism and what is indeterminism? What is the meaning of the word 'Cause'? Is it a hypothesis, a principle or a law? Is it an indispensable crutch of thought? Or is it a mere fashion of speaking? How is causality related to determinism? His answer is "the causal idea emerges from the fact that imagination and understanding cannot escape the constraint of association and the force of habit. It is because the formulas of Leibnitz and Laplace which made predictability the criterion of causality that we still cling to this meaning of causality. According to Max Planck, although predictability is an infallible criterion for the presence of a causal nexus, we must not infer that predictability is equivalent to causality.

According to Cassirier, every genuine causal proposition, every natural law contains not so much a prediction of future events as a promise of future cognition. According to Planck, quantum theory exploded the notion of continuity, it created a special body of laws for small things inapplicable to large things; it dethroned determinacy and made randomness king, it made

philosophers take to heir beds and physicists to flee to insanity. Quantum mechanics is a statistical discipline. It presents no exact description of an individual particle and makes no exact prediction of its behaviour.

According to Heisenberg, what are the implications of the uncertainty principles? Does it contain the denial of causality? Heisenberg's specific answer was 'Yes'. As a matter of principle we cannot come to know the present in all its determinative factors. Many physicists share this opinion. We must not ask of the notion of cause more than it can give and we must not misapply it. Not only is a test of rigorous causality excluded for practical reasons, but it is also seen to be impossible in theory at least in this world of ours.

A rigorous space time description and a rigorous causal sequence for individual processes cannot be realised simultaneously-the one or the other must be sacrificed. This, in essence is the principle of complementarity of Bohr. This principle does not require that in all cases strict causal connections for individual process be impossible. The principle merely denies the possibility of our picturing with accuracy a sequence of causally related events in space time. A test of rigorous causality is impossible in mechanics.

It appears that Einstein was much perturbed by the abolition of the principle of determinism in modem day physics. He was not satisfied that the affairs of the world should be carried on with the principle of indeterminism. That this will lead to chaos was his considered opinion. He thought that the abdication of determinism in the affairs of the world is only a passing phase. But those who have contributed most to the development of new quantum mechanics resist Einstein's views and insist that rigorous causality is a myth.

Bohr's principle of complementarity mentioned above is today generally accepted by the leading quantum theorists. It is a compromise between classical causality and indeterminism. The uncertainty relations may be derived from phenomena involving an individual process and so are not due to vagueness involved in a statistical outlook. There is no causality in atomic physics. Most physicists do not accept determinism in the strict sense in which the term is used.

The question of causality and determinism has important consequences in man's conduct and in the field of Ethics. Can a man choose between different possible actions or is his feeling that he has freedom of choice a delusion? Without causality in the world there could be no point in educating people, in making any sort of moral or political appeal.

These questions are not direct consequences of the uncertainty principle. The uncertainty in quantum theory is so very much smaller than the uncertainty in daily life arising from the limitations of knowledge. Here is a man in a world as described by classical physics. There is a man in a world as described by modem physics. There is no difference in the two descriptions that would have any significant effect on the question of free choice and moral behaviour. In the macro world with which human beings are concerned, the indeterminacy of quantum mechanics plays no role. For this reason, it is a misconception to suppose that indeterminacy on the subatomic level has any bearing on -the question of free decision. However, a number of prominent scientists and philosophers of science think otherwise.

It is wrong to suppose that the principle of indeterminacy relates to the actual process of measurement. It is also erroneous to think that with more refined instruments the principle will vanish. The indeterminacy is inherent in the nature of things and is the absolute limit to the knowledge that can be obtained by a man by ordinary physical processes.

The spectral line emitted by the atom is because of the disturbance in the path of free electrons. The spectral line or radiation is observed by means of light or other form of energy. Which is the source of observation of a spectral line, is it in the electron? Or in the means of observation? or in a combination of both? In other words, this means that either the electron which emits the spectral line is observed directly or the process of observation brings into the field of vision the spectral line. The dimensions of electron is of the same order as Planck's constant or photon. This means that electron cannot be observed or measured by an equi-dimensional thing, viz. light. This is because the unit of measurement must always be smaller than the object to be measured.

It is pertinent to note here that the uncertainty relations apply to waves as well as particles. It has been mentioned earlier that the waves are mental concepts, whereas the particle is a physical concept. It is seen that both are equally affected by the uncertainty relations. This shows that the relations are constituents of knowledge at the ordinary level of experience. They affect only knowledge which is subject to occurrence in pairs, viz. position and time, energy and time and action and time. Once we get over these concepts which occur in pairs, the uncertainty relations do not come into the picture. This is exactly what Sri Sankara proposed in his Advaita theory, viz. that when one transcends the idea of opposites or pairs then the limitations of knowledge vanish. There is direct intuitive perception.

There is another way of looking at the principle of causality. The concept of cause and effect arises because of the passage of time between two events. Naturally with the changes in the concept of time, the concept of causality

also will change. If we are to apply different concepts of time, we arrive at different theories of cosmology and theories of creation of the world, stability of the universe and other related subjects. This problem is related to the theories of steady state universe, expanding universe and oscillating universe. These are different theories prevalent in cosmology.

According to Shri Jagjit Singh,* if instead of kinematical time, 't' the observer adopted Milnes Dynamical time 'T', the time recorded by say the rotating earth, we would find that the universe is not expanding nor was it created at some finite past. Time would appear to stretch backwards and forwards forever in agreement with the common sense world view. But this system of time reckoning forces a modification of our concept of space which is no longer Euclidian but Hyperbolic.

The concept of time and flow of time is central to the theme of causality and determinism. The concept of time, in its turn is linked with the concept of light and its measurement. The essence of Planck's theory is that energy x time is a constant. The bang theory of creation of universe supposes that to start with it was infinite energy. At that instant time was zero. Therefore, the product viz. infinity and zero was the constant. This same constant is being maintained by the decrease of energy and with the passage of time. In other words, this supports the steady state theory of universe which states that the universe will continue for ever in the steady state. But then this is inconsistent with the concept of passage of time. At this stage, the law of Entropy comes into operation. This means that the energy level of the universe will become zero and there will be death of universe. This idea was prevalent in the early years of this century. This prospect of the death of the universe was not to the liking of many scientists. Therefore, a group of scientists had advanced the theory of creation of extra matter or stores of energy. There are difficulties in accepting this theory also. If matter is to be created afresh then from what is this matter created and what is the process of creation? It therefore appears that the theory of expanding universe will not suit the state of knowledge existing at present. There is another difficulty with the theory of creation. If there is creation there must be destruction also. This action leads to the death of the universe. These conflicts arise because of the fundamental assumption viz. Energy x Time is a constant. In an attempt to get round the difficulties created by this concept, a group of scientists led by Milne propounded a new theory of time which will provide for variations and interpretations of these fundamental conclusions. With the modified concept of time, the concept of creation and the concept of destruction vanish. This is also the theory of Sri Sankara who says that the theories of creation and destruction are because of the limited concepts available to our limited knowledge. Once we transcend this limit of knowledge the concept of creation, existence and destruction vanish.

The conclusions which one can draw from the above discussions are that the principle of causality and determinism. the principle of uncertainty of Heisenberg, the principles of complementarity of Bohr are all applicable only to certain spheres of knowledge available to man. Once we transcend these limits these concepts will not come into operation and man will be able to achieve the miracle. The miracle is what may be termed as understanding of nature of the absolute or the nature of ultimate principle which man can perceive but which he cannot observe. This leads us to the next chapter where we will discuss the nature of the absolute according to Sri Sankara and the nature of the absolute according to the modem developments in physics.

THE NATURE OF ABSOLUTE

The main question in Philosophy is about the nature of the absolute. Is there any unifying principle underlying the phenomena of nature? Is there any unity which binds the living creatures with the objects found in nature? What is the nature of the universe? Was the universe created; if so, is there any end to the universe? These are questions which have attracted the attention of philosophers in the West as well as in the East. In fact, we may say it is the difference in the interpretation of the relationship between man and God that distinguishes one religion from another and one philosophy from another. Therefore, no discussion of the philosophical problems will be complete if we do not discuss the nature of the absolute, or the fundamental principle operating in the universe.

The theory of philosophy propounded by Sri Sankara is known as Advaita theory. According to Him, there is no difference between man and the external universe. Since he denies anything external, to man, the other questions mentioned above do not really call for a detailed discussion. According to him when man reaches certain stages of evolution then all these questions cease to agitate his mind and they lose their importance. At that stage, he attains supreme bliss and there is perfect union. In V. 125. He says. "There is some Absolute Entity, the eternal substratum of the consciousness of egoism.

अस्ति कश्चित्स्वयं नित्यमहं प्रत्ययलम्बनः।

अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सन्पञ्चकोशविलक्षणः॥ वि ॥चू॥ १२५॥

This Atman is a self cognised entity because It is cognised by Itself. Hence the individual soul is itself and directly the supreme Brahman and nothing else.

असौ स्वसाक्षिकते श्वावा यतः स्वेनानुश्वूयते।

अतः परं स्वयं साक्षात्प्रत्यगात्मान चेतरः॥

The Universe does not exist apart from the individual's soul and the perception, of its separateness is false like, the qualities of blueness in the sky. Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from its substratum? It is the substratum which appears like that through delusion.

अतः पृथङ्नास्ति जगत्परात्मनः

पृथक्प्रतीतिस्तु मृषा गुणादिवत्।

आरोपितस्यास्ति किमर्थवत्ताऽ

धिष्टानमाश्वाति तथा भ्रमेण॥ वि॥चू॥ २३५॥

That which is untouched by the six-fold wave meditated upon by the Yogis heart but not grasped by the sense, organs, which the Buddhi cannot know.

षड्भिः ऊर्मिभिरयोगि योगिहृदभ

श्वावितं न करणैः विश्वावितम्।

बुद्ध्यवेद्यमनवद्यमस्ति यत्

ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि श्वावयात्मनि॥ वि॥चू॥ २५६॥

In S. 761 He says, 'Inasmuch as Brahman is not an object of thought, It is devoid of all attributes and transcends all verbal definitions. Tranquil in itself, it is without beginning or end. It is infinite in nature subject to no modifications incomprehensible by means of reasoning transcending thought and beyond the reach of knowledge.

निर्विशेषं निराश्वासमतादृशमनीदृशम्।

अनिर्देश्यमनाद्यन्तमनन्तं शान्तमच्युतम्।

अप्रतिकर्यमविज्ञेयं निर्गुणं ब्रह्मशिष्यते॥ स॥वे॥सा॥सं॥ ७६१॥

It can be reached neither by means of mind nor by word.

न वाक्यप्रवृत्तिरपि वा न मनः प्रवृत्तिः।

Seer, seeing and the Seen is a false notion.

द्रष्टा च दृश्यं च तथा च दर्शनं भ्रमस्तु सर्वः॥ स॥वे॥सा॥सं॥ ७७१॥

In essence, Sri Sankara says that the universe which the person observes is only the universe which he thinks he sees. The process can be compared to the observation of a snake in piece of rope. When a person thinks that he sees a snake, does the process of seeing consist in the object which is the piece of rope or does it reside in the cognitive process of his mind? If the question is to be decided by perception, then the person does see the snake but the snake has no reality and never existed. Once knowledge dawns on him, the idea of snake leaves his mind. But the very idea of snake can occur only if there is something there on which he superimposes an idea of snake. Does this mean that there is objective existence which corresponds to rope? According to Sri Sankara there is such an objective thing. In other words, the universe has an objective existence apart from the observer as long as the observer accepts the difference. Real knowledge consists in getting rid of this notion of the acceptance of a thing apart from one's self. Earlier we have discussed this question and we have observed that the process of seeing, seer and the seen have no independent existence. If a person crosses the boundary of sensual perceptions then the question of an objective thing existing apart from the consciousness does not arise. This is the fundamental truth which had been repeatedly stressed by Sri Sankara. He also says that this realisation of truth can never be achieved by observation or by reason or by intellect.

In S. 841, He says, 'I am not limited either by the body or the sense organs, or the intellect'.

न मेऽस्ति देहेन्द्रियबुद्धियोगो ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ८४१ ॥

In S. 773 he says. 'Thou art not the physical body, nor the vital forces nor the sense organs, nor mind, nor the intellect nor the ego. Thou art not any of these either individually or collectively. That Supreme witnessing consciousness Thou art that'.

न हि त्वं देहोऽसावसुरपि च चाऽप्यक्षनिकरो

मनो वा बुद्धिर्वा कचिदपि तथाऽहंकृतिरपि ।

न चैषां संघातस्त्वमु भ्रवति विद्वन शृणु परं

यदेतेषां साक्षी स्फुरणममलं तत्त्वमसि हि ॥ स ॥वे ॥सा ॥सं ॥ ७७३ ॥

In Mandukya Karika Bhashya He says 'It is not as if the snake that is assumed illusorily in the rope existed there in fact and then was removed through discrimination. And non-duality is the supreme truth. No world either evolving or dissolving exists'.

न हि रज्ज्वां भ्रान्ति बुद्धया कल्पितः

सर्पो विद्यमानः सन्विवेकतो निवृत्तः।

तस्मान्न कश्चिन्प्रपञ्चः प्रवृत्तो निवृत्तो वास्ति ॥ मा ॥का ॥श्चा ॥ ।॥१७ ॥

Pure conscious self is self existent. No one can disprove its independence of other things inasmuch as it never ceases to exist.

Sri Sankara says that the consciousness is the only reality in the universe. Consciousness exists always and every person is aware of this consciousness. Therefore, there is no need to prove the existence of consciousness. All other consequences follow from the mere existence of consciousness.

Once consciousness is developed to a high level then the other questions of less importance lose their significance and consciousness rules without being disturbed by other limiting conditions. This, according to Sri Sankara, is the highest goal which the conscious human being should always try to reach.

Almost identical is the core of the implications of the latest developments in modem physics. The principles which have deep philosophical implications are (i) Heisenberg's uncertainty principle (ii) Bohr's principle of complementarity (iii) Mach's universal principle iv) the theory of relativity of which the main feature is the constancy of the velocity of light for all observers in the universe (v) the principle that radiation is transmitted in discreet quantities called quanta.

Heisenberg has himself interpreted his principle thus. The chain of cause and effect can be quantitatively verified only if the whole universe were considered as a single system but then physics has vanished and only a mathematical scheme remains. The partition of the world into observing and observed system prevents a sharp formulation of a law of cause and effect.

Bohr also comes to the same conclusion that the ordinary level of perceptions will not give us an insight into the truth of nature. He says, 'indeed we find ourselves here on the very path taken by Einstein of adapting our modes of perception borrowed from the sensations to the gradually deepening knowledge of the laws of Nature. The hindrances met with on this path originate above all in the fact that, so to say, every word in our language refers to our ordinary perception'. The truly isolated system is represented by the entire universe where the observer and his measuring devises are contained within the system. Here the distinction between subject and object becomes confused and so observation is impossible. Bohr has interpreted his principle as implying that an exact localisation in space time on the one hand and rigorous causal relations on the other illustrate two different aspects of

reality. Reality itself is not depicted correctly by the one or the other of these two modes if considered singly.

D' Abro another writer says, 'In the sub-atomic world mechanical representations and classical concepts are no longer of much avail except as props to a bewildered imagination which is unable to feel at ease in its new surroundings. Waves and particles seem to dissolve one into the other as though they were the same and yet not the same. The thing to remember is that the uncertainty principles set limit to the accuracy of knowledge. Beyond lies a fog of uncertainty due to the peculiarities of nature herself. All that we can know are the probabilities. It is unnecessary at this stage to venture an opinion on the merits of the new quantum philosophy for in any case our conclusion remains unchanged. Absolute truth is beyond our reach. We cannot give expression in words to new concepts that differ widely from those of the common place level. Only by perseverance and prolonged meditation can an idea of what is implied forces itself upon us.'

The essence of modem physics lies in the capacity to measure and interpret the measurement. Pressing logically to the end, we come to the conclusion that there is a limit to the process of measurement beyond which we cannot proceed. The only way whereby we can measure the length between the two adjacent points is by means of light. But light itself has a definite wave length. If the two points are at a distance which is less than the wave length of light, then the two points are observed as coincident. It. therefore, follows that the physical means of measurement must naturally limit the precision of measurement. Whatever we may do we cannot overcome this limit. This is a physical limit to the knowledge process.

If we analyse this point further, we come to the conclusion that the old abstractions (like the point) position and instantaneous velocity) have to give way to new abstractions. Naturally such abstractions cannot be cast in the image of anything that we can intuitively derive from our everyday experience of the macroscopic world. This sets a limit to intellectual knowledge of process and perceptions. Combined with the physical limits mentioned above, these intellectual limits also reiterate the observation of Sri Sankara that knowledge as such both physical and intellectual cannot understand and describe the fundamental truth.

Einstein in his theory of relativity says 'considered logically the concepts of space and time and event, are free creations of the human intelligence. An attempt to become conscious of the empirical source of these fundamental concepts would show to what extent we are actually bound to these concepts. In this way, we become aware of our freedom of which in case of necessity it is always a difficult matter to make sensible use. There is no such thing as

empty space i.e. space without field. Space time does not claim existence on its own but only as a structural quality of the field'.

Isaac Asimov in his book "Understanding Physics", says "in actual fact a complete analysis is impractical even by present day techniques because of the sheer difficulty of the mathematics involved. There was a permanent wall in the way of total knowledge, a wall built by the inherent nature of the universe itself. The existence of uncertainty need not be a source of humiliation for science. To know the limits of knowledge is itself an item of the first importance".

In his book, "The Rise of new Physics" D'Abro says, "the invariant velocity of light which is the basis of Lorentz transformation becomes inter-woven, as it were, into the very fabric of the world. Both the theory of relativity and quantum theory displace our attention from the infinite (whether great or small) to the finite (great or small). "Discussing the implication of wave theory, he says when we pass to the higher atoms with their several electrons; the introduction of hyper space cannot be avoided. Hyperspace is obviously a mathematical fiction.

The power of science is in its capacity to discover, understand and make use of the laws of nature and not in violating them. The point is that we cannot perceive an atomic object directly by means of our five senses. An atomic object is not simply the sum of the properties of waves and particles. This 'atomic' something is imperceptible to our five senses but is real none the less.

Bohr's principle of complementarity says that 'Any truly profound phenomenon of nature cannot be defined uniquely by means of the words of our language, and requires at least two mutually exclusive or incompatible complementary concepts to define it. "Such complementary pairs of concepts are, wave and particle continuity and discreetness, causality and chance, phenomenon and observation. This principle may be compared to the concepts of duality which according to Sri Sankara is necessary to describe the phenomena of the world in the ordinary levels. The strength of philosophy lies in overcoming these dual principles and intuitively observing the oneness behind these apparently incompatible dualities.

Knowledge of quantum mechanics is a certain emotional process that compels one to go through its whole history again. The abstract knowledge once acquired, irreversibly influences the whole subsequent life of a person. It influences his attitude towards physics, towards other sciences and even his moral criteria. One realises that the questions concerning the completeness of physical knowledge and the essence of phenomena are not within the scope of physics and cannot be answered by physical means. A.N.

Whitehead expresses the same sentiment when he said, 'I am impressed by the inadequacy of our conscious thoughts to express our sub-conscious. Only at rare moments, does that deeper and vaster world come through into conscious thought or expression".

In his book 'Concepts of Modem Physics' Arthur Biesler writes, "Relativity involves an analysis of how measurements depend upon the observer as well as upon what is observed. From relativity emerges a new mechanics in which there are intimate relationships between space and time, mass and energy". Together with special relativity, the wave particle duality is central to an understanding of modem physics. The 'true nature of light is no longer something that can be visualised in terms of every day experience. Speaking about the consequences of uncertainty principles, he says that electrons cannot be present within the nucleus. The certainties proclaimed by Newtonian mechanics are illusory.

A detailed investigation of the sources of our ideas has shown that there is only one type of model or picture which can be intelligible to our restricted minds viz. one in mechanical terms. Yet a review of recent physics has shown that all attempts at mechanical models or pictures have failed and must fail. For a mechanical model or picture must represent things as happening in space and time while it has recently become clear that the ultimate processes of nature neither occurs nor admit of representation in space and time. Thus an understanding of the ultimate processes of nature is for ever beyond our reach. The true object of scientific study can never be the realities of nature but only of our own observations of nature.

The new physics places two partial pictures before us, one in terms of particles and one in terms of waves. Neither of these can tell the whole truth. The pictures we draw of nature show limitations, these are the price we pay for limiting our pictures of nature to the kinds that can be understood by our minds. In transcending space and time, the new quantum mechanics finds a new background which makes for far greater simplicity and so probably comes nearer to ultimate truth. So long as we are concerned only with our sensations, it is all the same whether we regard the world as a Mental Construct or as having an existence of its own, independent of mind. The doctrine of materialism asserted that this space and time and material world comprised the whole of reality. It interpreted thought as mechanical motion in the brain and emotion as a mechanical motion in the body. The new physics suggests that besides matter and radiation which can be represented in ordinary space and time there must be other ingredients which cannot be so represented.

Many philosophers have regarded the world of appearance as a kind of illusion, some sort of creation or selection of our minds which had in some way less existence in its own right than the underlying world of reality. Modern physics does not confirm this view. The new quantum theory has shown that we must probe the deeper substratum of reality before we come to understand the world of appearance. In addition to the dualism of appearance and reality many pictures of the world have exhibited a second dualism that of mind and matter or of body and soul.

The physical theory of relativity has shown that the electric and magnetic forces are not real at all, they are mere mental constructs of our own. The relativity theory of gravitation because of its close association with pure mathematics seems to carry us yet further along the road from materialism to mentalism and the same may be said of most of recent development of physical science. The final picture consists wholly of waves and its ingredients are whole mental constructs. And now that we find that we can best understand the course of events in terms of knowledge, there is a certain presumption that reality is wholly mental.

Sri Sankara says that the importance of the questions of science lies in the fact that it stresses the questions about the nature and meaning of life. These questions cannot be answered by science alone. The men who have sought to conceive the world as a whole have failed in the opinion of both science and mysticism.

Heisenberg, while discussing the philosophical problems in Nuclear physics says, "Modern physics in the final analysis has already discredited the concept of the truly real. Matter exists because energy assumes the form of elemental particles. The elemental particles of modem physics are defined by the requirements of mathematical symmetry. They are not eternal and unchanging and they can hardly, therefore, strictly be termed real. And mathematical pattern in the final analysis is an intellectual concept.

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N. Subramanian M.A. LLB. LRS.
Calcutta
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Smritis: Way to Realisation through Good Conduct

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

What are Smritis?

Every religion has philosophy, rituals, mythology, and code of conduct as the four pillars on which it stands. If any of these four pillars gets neglected, then that religion loses its vitality, and soon it degenerates either into fanaticism, or gets lost into oblivion. The four essential pillars of the Hindu religion are Vedanta (Upanishads), Tantras, Puranas, and the Smritis respectively.

These four pillars of Hinduism, however, have their source and sustenance in the Vedas only. The entire spiritual ideals, religion, and culture of the Hindu race are rooted in the Vedas, which are also known as Sruti. In essence, the Vedas contain the eternal principles, or the universal laws of both the external and the internal nature, and hence they show the ways to attain dharma, artha, kama, moksha -- the four purusartha (goals of life). Since the Vedas were inaccessible to the masses, and also there was a need for an elaboration of the statements made in these works, a new class of scriptures, called Smriti, was born. Thus works like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Purana, Dharma shastras (law books, also known as Smritis) are all Smritis.

The Vedas supply the framework of spiritual life, while the details of spiritual life are filled by the Smritis. So, even though the Smritis are important, they are considered inferior to the Vedas in matters of authority. If per chance a statement of Smriti appears to contradict the Vedas, then the words of Smriti gets overruled.

Smritis mean both the supplementary scriptures (i.e. Puranas, Itihasa etc.), and also the law books like Manu Smriti. Hereafter, this article uses the term Smriti to mean the dhrama shastras (Law books). These Smritis are the systemically arranged dharmas (code of conduct) scattered over the different texts of the Vedas. They supplement and explain the Vidhi (what one should do) and Nisedha (what one must not do) in the Vedas, which when followed properly can lead a person to the ultimate goal of life, which is liberation. These dharma also regulate Hindu national, social, family and individual obligations.

Smritis as Dharmashastra

The Vedas have six auxiliary literature (grammar, prosody etc.) like their limbs (anga), and hence are known as Vedanga. These are considered very important for the study of the Vedas. Kalpa is one of them.

To help the Vedic priests perform the various details connected with a sacrifice, a kind of manual was worked out. With time each Veda had its own handbook of rituals written in a short form (sutra), or in metrical form. They came to be known as Kalpa. Of these Kalpa Sutras, the Srauta Sutras deal with the performance of the public sacrifices, and the Grihya Sutras deal with the ceremonies applicable to the domestic life of a man.

The Dharma Sutras are directly connected to the Grihya Sutras, and deal exclusively with dharma, which is defined as right, duty, law, religion, custom, and usage. The Grihya Sutras prescribe forty ceremonies, known as samskara, for a person. These samskara govern his journey from birth to death. In later times, only sixteen of these remained popular, and in recent times, the number has gone down to ten.

Most of the Dharma Sutras originated in the Vedic schools, but some of them like Gautama Dharma Shastra, and Manu Smriti are independent works, although rooted in the Vedic tradition.

Laws, Commandments, Smritis

Before setting down a law or a constitution, the law maker has to decide the rationale behind those laws. For example, the main purpose behind any social or criminal law is to safeguard the interests of a community, whereas the religious commandments are aimed at making an ordinary person outgrow his savage nature. If there is no higher purpose behind a law, then that law becomes a wall of imprisonment, instead of being the wall of protection.

The most famous code of conduct from ancient times is the code of Hammurabi from Mesopotomia, which was written down in c. 1760 BCE. This work is one of the earliest available set of laws and is also the best preserved work of its kind. The famous sayings like "an eye for an eye" and "an arm for an arm" are based on Hammurabi's Code. Most other sets of laws come from a small geographical area of the Eastern world that had a similar culture and belonged to the same racial group. These sets of laws have a great similarity amongst them, and they seem to have been inspired by a common source. The earlier code of Ur-Nammu (21st century BCE), the Hittite code of laws (ca. 1300 BCE), and Mosaic laws (traditionally ca. 1400 BCE), are examples of this.

Laws given by Moses, more popularly known as Ten Commandments, has played a very important role in the Judeo-Christian world. Similarly the Laws given by Buddha, and Zarathurasthra have played a vital role in shaping the lives of their followers.

Smritis are neither mere law books, nor are they like the constitution of a country, or of an organised society. These are not even commandments, but are shastras, scriptures. Shastra means 'that which governs', and is applied to a book only if it teaches the ways and means to attain mukti, the supreme goal of life. Books like Manusmriti are considered a shastra because they teach how a person who performs his svadharma (duties) faithfully can attain self realisation.

The Celebrated Hindu Lawgivers

The Vedas are believed to be the words of God, channelled through the realisations of the sages. So the sages are not treated as their creators. On the other hand, Smritis are the creation of various sages. The principles of religion that are in the Vedas are unchangeable, but the religious practices that are based upon the social position and correlation have to change with the change in the society. For example, in matters of food, the climatic and other changes make it necessary to change the rules that govern them. Similar is the case with many such habits and practices. For this reason, the Smritis have varied from time to time, and place to place. Thus the Smritis of the various yugas like Satya Yuga and Treta yuga are different from each other. And since they are not absolute, Smritis are treated as secondary in importance to the Vedas.

From time to time, the great lawgivers amended the existing laws that had become obsolete. They made alterations, adaptations, readjustments, additions and deletions to suit the needs of the time so that a person could live his life in accordance with the Vedic ideals, despite the changed conditions.

There are eighteen main Smritis or Dharma Shastras: Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parasara. Vishnu, Daksha, Samvarta, Vyasa, Harita, Satatapa, Vasishtha, Yama, Apastamba, Gautama, Devala, Sankha-Likhita, Usana, Atri and Saunaka. The Gautama Dharma Sutra, belonging to the tradition of Sama Veda is considered to be the earliest of its kind and must have been composed between 600 and 300 B.C. Another famous work, Apastamba Dharma Sutra belongs to Taittiriya recension of Yajur Veda.

Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parasara are the more celebrated lawgivers of the Hindus. The Hindu society is mostly governed by the laws made by these three great sages. Of them, Manu is the greatest, most authoritative and the

oldest lawgiver, and.his work, Manusmriti, is the most famous law book of the Hindus. Yajnavalkya Smriti is next in importance to it. These two works are accepted throughout the country with respect and authority.

Philosophy of the Smritis

There is a very precise and clear philosophy of life, individual and social, behind the scheme of the Smritis. Like any other Hindu philosophy, these works treat the universe as a complete whole and pulsating with life. According to them, the manifestation of that life is not same everywhere: it sleeps in inert objects, is awake in plants, moves in animals, and is self-conscious in men. Man is considered to be the highest expression of life, but he can also evolve culturally (which includes spiritual growth). This evolution is possible through various means, of which the practise of one's dharma (prescribed duties) is the best.

The writers of Smritis accept inequality in the universe as an inviolable fact, and believe that the real equality is possible only at the spiritual level. So, they did not try to found a society on a theoretical possibility of equality, but struggled to work with individuals and groups that they had in hand. Also, they did not believe the inequality amongst men (the castes) to be real or even presumable. But to perform indispensable functions of the society, each person had to be assigned a fixed role according to certain criteria.These criteria were never fixed with the motive of greed or materialistic outlook. Instead, the existing social pattern and also the ultimate spiritual goal was always kept as the guiding principle of every Smriti.

The detailing of rules and laws in the Smritis is based on the validity of Varnashrama, and also on the inviolability of the law of karma, including rebirth. Without these foundations, the Dharma shastras are irrelevant. Hindu Smritis are meaningless for a society that does not accept life after death. They are also useless for people who do not accept the fact of potential equality at the level of spirituality, despite the prevailing inequality at the socio-economic level. Once these facts are accepted, then only a person learns to believe that the good or bad that comes in his life, is the result of his own past actions. To make an improvement from where he belongs, he himself has to make an effort. It is then that he realises the importance of his own freedom to regulate his conduct by rational volitions and power to conquer his impulses. This is where Smritis come to help.

Every religion expects its followers to adhere to the norms set by its scriptures. Gita says that while making a decision one must stick to what the scriptures say, 'Tasmat shastram pramanam te... ' If an individual depends too much on his own judgement regarding correctness of an action, he may then get swayed by the impurities of his mind, and he may ultimately land into

serious trouble. Keeping this in view, Smritis codified every possible action of an individual in such a way that he did not have to think for himself what to do and what not to do. By simply obeying the commands of a Smriti, a person can outgrow his human limitations. In turn, the society also becomes stable when a majority practises these codes.

Smritis are not the high preachers of morality, nor do they take up a condescending moral stand by commanding 'Thou shall not...' These are also not like the absurd and cruel laws interpreted and dictated by the degenerates of religion. Rather, the writers of Smritis only codified what was being practised in the society by the majority of people of that period. It was obvious to the sages that to make the society run smoothly, it was necessary for all the members to follow a common code of conduct. So, whenever the society changed its habits and behaviour pattern due to changed circumstances, the sages noted them, and then codified them for everyone to follow. At the same time, they made sure that these laws did not go against the basic principles of the Vedas.

Smritis are older than the Puranas, and are possibly earlier than even the Epics, but they are not treated as sacred as them, nor are they as popular. The religious spirit which reached its acme in the Veda-Samhitas and Upanishads, found its popular expression in the Epics. Even the aspirations of the Indian minds are well articulated in them, but not so much in the Smritis, because these are in the form of legal texts on social conduct. However, the credit for the stability of the Hindu society, and the high moral standards of a Hindu have come entirely due to these Smritis.

Characteristics of Smritis

The chief characteristics of the Smritis can be summed up as:
* They deal with topics under three main heads: acara (rites), vyavahara (dealings), and prayscitta (penances and expiation).
* Both secular and religious laws are discussed, since these have been traditionally considered inseparable in India.
* The duties of the Varnashrama Dharma are discussed in detail. Every individual is assigned a place in the society, and is given an appropriate duty. Compared to this, today's world is a place where everyone is rootless, and where everyone runs from the pillar to the post in search of stability.
* The duties and responsibilities of the king (Raja dharma), rules for taxation, ownership, money-lending etc. have been discussed. Even the most powerful king was kept under check, and was not allowed to become a despot, only because of the influence of these Smritis.
* Duties of women, and also the responsibilities towards them, have been discussed with care. Manusmriti says that 'the gods reside in the house where a woman is treated with respect.'

* Various samskaras (sacramental rites) like upanayana, marriage etc. are discussed. Smritis assert that only by purifying oneself through these rites, a person can become fit for the ultimate realisation of the Self.
* Punishment for various crimes have been recommended. These lawgivers believed that if a person was punished for his crime by the king, then he once again became as pure as ever. In case the guilty escaped the punishment, he had to suffer through various kinds of losses and diseases.
* Rules about food, clothing, cleansing etc. have been discussed.
* Prayascitta, the penances for sins and mistakes other than crimes, have been discussed.

Smritis take a commonsense view of the duties of man. They also object to taking of sannyasa by a person who has not fully performed his obligatory duties towards the world.

These books discuss six kinds of duties: Varna dharma (General caste duties), Ashrama dharma (General duties related to the station of life), Varna-Ashrma Dharma (based on the particular station of a particular caste), Nimitta dharma (penances), Guna Dharma (duties born of a particular position, eg. a king's), and Samanya (duties common to all). They lay down the laws that regulate national, communal, family and individual obligations in general (Samanya) as well as in particular (Visesha).

One very important concept of dharma developed in these works is the acceptance of a lower kind of dharma in which it is prescribed to act in one way, and a higher kind of dharma where staying away from that very act under certain conditions is considered more meritorious. For example, telling the truth is considered to be meritorious, but not telling the truth (when it is unpleasant) is considered to be more meritorious. Similarly, preaching dharma is meritorious, but not preaching dharma (when it harms or injures others) is considered to be more meritorious.

Manu Smriti

Manusmriti is the oldest and the most authoritative work amongst smritis. The first references of Manu and his heritage occurs in the Rig Veda. The Mahabharata also makes many references of the work by the great lawgiver, but the book is believed to have taken its final shape around second BCE. Considering many pros and cons, it is possible that the work was completed before Buddhism made roots in India.

Manu's statements are considered healthy and acceptable, and hence all later works were based on this work. Many great scholars and sages wrote commentaries on it. According to the Vedas, whatever Manu said is wholesome like medicine. The book was considered so useful that even the South-East Asian countries accepted the norms set by it.

Manusmriti has around 2700 shlokas, arranged in twelve chapters dealing with acara, vyavahara, and prayscitta. It is in the form of dialogue between Manu and his disciple Bhrigu in the presence of many other sages who wanted to know about dharma.

Manu's work begins with the exposition if the universal concept of Hindu philosophy that God alone exists. The Creation begins due to mysterious reasons, but is an act of God. The soul, which in essence is inseparable from God, identifies itself with matter and runs after it through its senses. In the process, it gains virtues and vices which in turn produce good and bad results. With the beginning of this vicious cycle of ignorance--desires--action--ignorance, a soul gets entangled more and more in the trappings of the world. To come out of this cycle, one has to acquire the Knowledge of the Supreme God. This requires purity of mind, which can be attained only through a thorough cleansing of the body, mind and social conduct. To preserve one's purity, a person must steer clear of every kind of contamination. The more a person is pure, the more important he is for the society, and the more he is advanced towards spiritual realisation. The guidelines of keeping oneself pure comes through dharma.

According to Manu, Dharma is to be known through the Vedas, Smritis, conduct of saints, and finally through one's own purified intellect. By following Dharma, one attains perfection. Manu goes into detail on the duties of a student, householder, hermit, monk and king. He also discusses the principles of political administration and the vows and observances to be followed as expiation for the commission of certain sins. From there he goes on to discuss spiritual matters, safety, personal habits, cleanliness, sanitation, ways of conduct, and subjects of common sense.

The great lawgiver accepts that there is hardly any activity that is not prompted by desire (kama), but to act solely on such urge is tamasik (demeaning). It is to curb these base tendencies that dharma was promulgated by the sages. Manu stresses the importance of dharma by saying that one is born alone, one dies alone, and one enjoys the fruits of one's deeds alone. Father, mother, wife, children and friends will not come to one's help in the other world; only Dharma will rescue him. He finally sums up his instructions on dharma by saying that of all dharma, attainment of knowledge of Self is supreme, since that is the only way to attain immortality.

The work of Manu is more than 2500 years old, and yet it approaches such levels of rationality and justice that one is left wonderstruck. His approach towards various issues has one fundamental rule: Quality is more important than quantity. Manu gives tremendous freedom and licenses to the educated and the cultured, but he also demands huge sacrifices from them. While giving privileges to the Brahmins, he repeatedly asserts that a Brahmin who is

not devoted to the Vedas and austerities, is not to be treated as a Brahmin, but as a Shudra. Such a fallen Brahmin's privileges etc. are to be at par with a Shudra only.

Manu accepts the existence of customs peculiar to place, class, and families. He advises the conquering king to safeguard and maintain the customs of the conquered people, and yet consolidate his own empire. In contrast, one may look at the various conquering barbarians and the kings, including Alexander, whose first act after victory was to destroy the local culture. Today's India, despite all its diversity, is an integrated country only because the Hindu kings of the past followed the political principles of Manu.

Creation according to Manu

God alone exists. He is eternal, sat (real, because He exists) and also asat (because He is unknowable and indiscernible by the mind and senses). In the beginning the Lord alone existed. He was indiscernible, so there was only divine darkness.

Desirous of Creation, the Lord first created the great elements (sattva, rajas, tamas). He now appeared knowable (by the Yogis), with supreme creative power. This dispelled the divine darkness. He then created the divine waters and placed his seed in them. The waters are called nārah. Since God first resided (ayana) there, He is called Narayana.

That seed became a golden egg (Hiranyagarbha), from which Brahma was born. He stayed meditating in that egg for a whole year (of Brahma), and then he broke it into two by his mere will. Out of those two halves, Brahma formed heaven and earth, and placed sky, oceans etc. in between.

He then created Mahat (cosmic mind) and Ahamkara (cosmic Ego). The rest of creation followed according to the Samkhya/Vedanta principle.

Brahma then created the gods, human beings, the great sages Sadhyas, and yajna --the eternal sacrifice. He then went on to create different kinds of actions and emotions. These followed the same pattern as it was in the previous cycle of creation.

Whatever qualities and emotions he assigned to different beings at the time of the first creation: good or bad, ferocity or gentleness, virtue or sin, truth or falsehood, that clung to them even afterwards to them.

To make the creation go faster, he divided his own body and became half male and half female. From the female he produced Virat. That Virat did tapasya from which Manu was born. Manu also did tapasya to create the first

ten Prajapati, who are: Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracheta, Vasistha, Bhrigu and Narada.

These Prajapatis created seven other Manus. They also created many other class of beings who had not yet been created.

Commanded by Manu, these great Prajapati also did a lot of tapasya and with the power acquired through that, they created both the immovable and the movable beings according to their karma over series of creation and dissolution.

So the goal of life for everyone is to follow the path of dharma, and get out of the cycle of life and death.

God

Manu accepts the knowledge of Brahman as the supreme goal of life. The concept of personal God, or Iswara, does not find any place in his outlook towards life, and concepts like God's will, surrender to God, predestination etc. are completely alien to his philosophy. Summing up the process of spiritual realisation he says:
"By the regular practice of the Vedas, constant internal and external purity, practice of austerity, and by not being inimical towards any being, one gets the memory of past lives. This makes one strive for the knowledge of Brahman. The knowledge of Brahman results in infinite joy for the person." (Manu Smriti 4.148-9)

Women

Manu firmly believes that women have the power to sway the minds of menfolk, irrespective of any existing relationship. So, women needed to be treated with care and caution. License to women to move around wantonly was a dangerous thing for her, her family, and the society.

However, Manu is emphatic about the rights and privileges of women, and treats them with great respect. He also introduces the concept of stree dhan (the property of a wife) which cannot be touched by the husband. Special instructions are repeatedly given for the education of daughters, and the protection of sister, wife and mother.

When Swamiji was in America, a controversy was raging there regarding the rights and privileges of Hindu widows in India. There was a group called Ramabai circle who found fault with everything that India had to say or do about its widows. Unwittingly Swamiji was also sucked into it, but he refrained from making any direct response. Ultimately it was his friend Dr. Lewis G.

Janes's, who made a full reply to Mrs. James McKeen, leader of the Brooklyn Ramabai Circle. His reply appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, part of which read:
"Not only that the wife inherits absolutely her husband's property and the use of his real estate during her lifetime, but that her own independent property, if she has offspring, goes to her children instead of to her husband. In case she has no offspring, another section makes her husband her heir; or, when the marriage is irregular, her mother and father inherit her estate instead of her husband.

"Still another section makes it the duty of the king to protect the inherited and other property "of wives and widows faithful to their lords" against all aggressors. "A righteous king must punish like thieves those relatives who appropriate the property of such females during their lifetime" (Manu, viii. 27, 28, 29). And against male relatives who would live on the separate property of females, this malediction is also hurled: "But those male relatives who, in their folly, live on the separate property of women, e.g., appropriate the beasts of burden, carriages and clothes of women, commit sin and will sink into hell" (Manu iii. 52). Thus, not only legal, but religious sanctions of the strongest kind protect the separate estates of Hindu women, be they single, wives or widows."

Shudras

Before one goes into the issues of Shudra as discussed by Manu, it must be remembered that the book was completed half a millennium before Jesus walked on this earth, and around quarter of a millennium before Julius Caesar considered it fit to call Britain and nearby countries barbarians.

In the time of Manu and earlier, Shudras were mostly the new entrants to Hinduism, who were yet to imbibe the high standards of Brahminical culture. They had not yet given up their basic tendencies of enjoyment and uncleanliness -- two important virtues of an upper caste. These two vices resulted in other personality faults like cruelty, selfishness etc. All this meant that they had not yet become fit to climb the social hierarchy. Hence, they were given all kinds of licenses when it came to enjoying sense pleasure (including meat eating, wine drinking, onion and garlic eating etc.), but were prohibited from reading and listening to the Vedas. Here it may be mentioned that to the sages, the knowledge of the Vedas was something like a copyrighted thing, and so, that knowledge could be imparted only to the right person, on payment of proper fees (dakshina). In other matters, they were treated more or less quite fairly.

Manu mentions that a shudra can attain the highest heaven exactly like a Brahmin simply by practising the good conduct of the Brahmins, and

performing five great sacrifices (explained later). The sage also mentions how a child of a shudra woman can become a Brahmin over successive generations.

The Idea of Justice

Manu prescribes different treatment for different kind of persons. For example "The seniority of Brahmins is from (sacred) knowledge, that of Kshatriyas from valour, that of Vaisyas from wealth, abut that of Shudras from age." (MS II.155).

"For a crime of theft, a Shudra should be penalised 8 times, the penalty should be 16 times if he is a Vaishya, 32 times if he is a Kshatriya and 64 times if he is a Brahmin. The punishment can be even 100 times or 128 times if he is a Brahmin. (MS VIII.337-338)"

"When the punishment for an ordinary citizen is 1 pana, the punishment for those in ruling class should be 1000 pana." (MS VIII.336).

On the other hand, Manu advises not to give the punishment of death to a Brahmin. Instead the convict's head should be shaved in public, which is equivalent to death punishment for him. (MS VIII. 379). After all, greater responsibility comes with greater understanding, and with it comes greater accountability. And, what is accountability without cost?

When most judicial systems of the world like British, French, American and Indian believe in "equality of all before justice", "uniform civil code" and all such great ideals, Was Manu then right in defining law in this partisan way?

Actually Manu particularises morality, instead of generalising it. It is unfortunate that we have come to associate punishment with suffering rather than penance and purification. When punishment is accepted with grace by the punished, it becomes penance for him. In turn, it takes him to the next level of spiritual evolution. This is the principle behind punishment and justice in Manu.

This may seem surprising, or even shocking to all those who have grown up with the popular feeds of the generalised approach to law and justice. 'All are same before the law' has become a truism even to a child, although it has no significance anywhere. When one looks closely at the two approaches of generalisation and particularisation of values, one is bound to feel surprised at the honesty and the insight of Manu, and the sheer dishonesty and hypocrisy of those who take a generalised approach.

Actually, morality, ethics and justice are always practised on the principle of tribe concern, which can also be termed as "in group" ethics, or "tribe ethics". Here tribe means the group to which one intrinsically belongs.

A monk, or a person living alone, away from any tribe, can indeed practise values without ever making any compromise. Mundaka Upanishad instructs spiritual aspirants to stick constantly to truth, tapas, right knowledge, and brahmacharya. But this is difficult for a person who belongs to a "tribe".

This is where Manu's genius comes into play.

At the time of Manu (c. 200 BCE), a large number of outsiders were entering the mainstream Hinduism. Then there were the jatis, which were the sub-sub castes of Hinduism. The whole country had literally lakhs of "tribe", each having its own code of conduct and moral principles. A fisherman would not cheat another fisherman, but would not mind cheating, say, a blacksmith.

Manu put a stop to all that, and, instead, crystallised them into four "tribes", known as the four Varna. The Varna system was already there, and so was the moral principles and the legal system. Manu simply took the entire thing together, juggled them and came up with his Smriti, that did away with the ghetto "tribe" mentality, and broadened the mental horizon of all by forcing people to follow one of the four sets of principles.

Not only that these four sets of morality and justice got rid of the lakhs of "tribe" practices, they also had most laws and principles in common with each other. That is how the idea of "India" was concretised by him.
This code of conduct is essentially a manual of unselfishness. Manu knew that not everyone can be equally unselfish, nor should one expect the same from all. So, there can neither be a uniform civil code, nor can there be same criminal laws for all. Not only that. Even the same person may not act on the same principles of morality on which he had been acting till yesterday.

Manu's greatness lies in his compassionate understanding of a man's weakness. From there stems his ideas of justice.

Yajnavalkya & Parasara Smriti

Next in importance to Manusmriti is Yajnavalkya Smriti. It has 1009 shlokas arranged systematically in three sections. The famous commentary Mitakshara by Vijnaneshwara is considered to be a standard work on this Smriti. Yajnavalkya Smriti is shorter and more liberal, particularly towards women, than Manusmriti. This maturity is also because it was written much later, probably in 5th A.D.

Compared to Yajnavalkya Smriti, Manusmriti is not a systematic treatise. For example, Manusmriti does not have a clear-cut division between religion and law, but being a later work, Yajnavalkya Smriti makes this distinction clear. Similarly, Manusmriti is more like a jumbled work in which the discussion jumps from issue to issue: it may have one shloka on religion, the next shloka on law, the third one on morality, and likewise. On the other hand, Yajnavalkya Smriti is very systematic. The demarcation between legal issues and religious issues by the sage Yajnavalkya is considered by many legal experts to be a great advance over Manusmriti.

Parasara Smriti is noted for its advanced and modernistic views. It deals only with acara and Prayascitta. It also discusses the Apad-dharma (the code during emergency) of the four castes. Madhavacharya wrote a commentary on this work.

Survey of Samskaras -- The Hindu sacraments

The samskaras cover the entire gamut of a Hindu's life: from the moment he is conceived in the mother’s womb, till his death. While commenting on the emphasis laid on samskaras by the Hindus, Max Muller wrote that this discloses "the deep-rooted tendency in the heart of man to bring the chief events of human life into contact with a higher power, and to give to our joys and sufferings a deeper significance and a religious sanctification."

The Hindu sages realised that an artful life requires constant care, culture and refinement, without which one would degenerate and become a savage. The transformation of the wild into the cultured is possible only through taming and training which has been prescribed beautifully by the samskaras (sacraments) over thousands of years. All the samskaras and allied ceremonies are based on the philosophy that life is a progressive cycle through a series of incidents centring around the desire to live, to enjoy, to think, and to retire. It is with this idea that the rituals and sacrifices evolved which were meant to sanctify one's life physically, emotionally, psychically and spiritually.

There are several objectives of samskaras:
* To receive the blessings of the gods, and to stay protected from the evil powers that beset human life at various stages.
* By making the gods happy through samskara, a practitioner hopes to obtain material gains. During some ceremonies prayers are offered to gods for health, wealth, children, intellect etc.
* Performance of some sacraments is used to enhance one's social status and also to get additional privileges. For example, a boy who goes through the sacred thread ceremony, acquires the right to study the Vedas, and also becomes important in the eyes of his peers.

* The samskaras also help in attaining cultural gains. Similarly, some impurity is inherently attached to the pre-natal stage of birth which gets removed through the proper rites.
* Sage Angiras says, "Just as a picture is painted with various colours, so the character of the individual is formed by the proper performance of the samskaras." Gautama says that samskaras, along with certain other noble qualities, take one to Brahman.
* Samskaras are designed to channel the energies of a man towards the creation of a life for him which would be soothing, enjoyable, spiritual, practical, and dignified. It is only thus that both the individual and the society can live in peace and harmony.

History and Sources of Samskaras

The earliest suggestion of samskaras are found in the Rig Veda. Some hymns used during marriage, conception and funeral are from this sacred book. In the Yajur Veda there are references to the tonsure ceremony, which was common to Shrauta or Yāga ceremonies. The Atharva Veda is a rich source of mantras relating to several of the samskaras like marriage, funeral, initiation for Vedic studies etc.

Gopatha Brahmana contains references to Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony). The word Brahmacharya is found in Sathapatha Brahman. Taittiriya Aranyaka contains Mantras for cremation, and Chandogya Upanishad relates how a brahmacharin (novice) is admitted to the gurukula (seminary).

Mention of Gayatri Mantra is made in Brihadaranyaka and other Upanishads. Taittiriya Upanishad contains the famous convocation address by the teacher to his students at the time of their graduation. This Upanishad also has mantras for begetting a learned son, and mantras to be used during funeral ceremonies.

Sodasa Samskara: The Sixteen Sacraments

There are sixteen samskaras that range from conception to funeral ceremonies.

1. Garbhādhāna: The propitious day and time are fixed astrologically for garbhadhana (conception), and the ritual follows a set pattern. The mantras uttered in this samskara are essentially prayers offered to God to help the bride conceive a good son.

2. Punsavanam: This ceremony is performed in the second, third and the fourth month of pregnancy. The meaning and object of this ceremony is to quicken a male child in the woman.

3. Simantonnayana: This is performed during the period between the fifth and the eighth months of pregnancy. Its implications are that the pregnancy be fruitful, the child be endowed with sharp and penetrating intellect, and the child be beautiful like the full-moon.

4. Jātakarma: This ceremony is performed before the umbilical cord of the child is severed. During the ceremony, the father looks at the face of the newly born infant, which at once redeems his debt to his ancestors. A name is also given to the child, in secret, lest his enemies should practice black magic on the child with that name.

5. Nāmakarana: The naming ceremony is performed normally on the tenth or twelfth day after birth. This is a simple ceremony in which the child is given a name. According to Asvalayana (a great lawgiver), the names of boys should have an even number of syllables. A two-syllable name will bring material prosperity and fame, and a four syllable name will bring religious fame.
The practice of naming children after favourite deities began from the Puranic times. The rise of the Bhakti movement made this practice popular. By naming one's child after gods, one gets the opportunity of uttering God's name whenever the child's name is called out.

6. Niskramana: The infant is taken out of the house into the climate of fresh air and sunshine for the first time.

7. Annaprāshana: This is the ceremony for the first feeding of cooked rice to the newborn. The object of this ceremony is to pray to gods with Vedic Mantras to bless the child with good digestive powers, good thoughts and talents. It is performed when the child is six months old, which is the right weaning time for a child.

8. Chudākarma: This ceremony of the first tonsure is to be performed in the third year of the male child. It also initiates the maintenance of a 'Sikha' (tuft of hair on the head) as a religious necessity after that age.

9. Karnavedha: The piercing of the child's ear should be done in the third or the fifth year from the date of birth.

10. Upanayana and Vedārambha: The thread ceremony is performed for the male child in the eighth year for Brahmins, eleventh year for Kshatriya, and twelfth year for Vaishya. This ceremony gives the child a second birth (Dwija), as it were, where the Guru (teacher) becomes his father and Gayatri (the great Vedic mantra) becomes his mother. The investiture with the sacred thread entitles the child to study the Vedas and participate in Vedic functions. In essence, the child commences his journey on the road to spiritual life only after this ceremony.

Instructions in the Vedas, known as Vedarambha, begin after this ceremony. The father of the would-be student imparts general information regarding the life of a Brahmacharin (celibate student) and preaches the code of conduct, which are a pointer to the rigours of discipline that a brahmachari was subjected to.

11. Samavartana: Upon completion of studies, the teacher used to hold a graduating ceremony in which instructions were given on how to lead the rest of life. "Speak the truth. Practise Dharma. Do not neglect the study of the Vedas. Having brought to the teacher the gift desired by him, (enter the householder’s life and see that) the line of progeny is not cut off. Do not swerve from the truth. Do not swerve from Dharma. Do not neglect (personal) welfare. Do not neglect prosperity (refers to righteous actions by which wealth is earned). Do not neglect the study and teaching of Vedas."

12. Vivāha: Marriage

13. Grihasthāshrama: Entering the life of a householder

14. Vānaprastha: A person was expected to give up his worldly responsibilities and privileges, and go to the forest to lead a simple and solitary life.

15. Sannyāsa: This is the last stage of a person's life, in which he renounces everything and devotes himself exclusively to the contemplation of Brahman.

16. Antyeshti: The last rites of the dead body are called the Antyeshti Samskara. There is no other Samskara thereafter for this body. This Samskara is also called by the names of Naramedha, Purushmedha etc.

Duties of a householder

The periods of life as a student and householder are full with special injunctions on the performance of ceremonies of different kinds. The prayer called Sandhyavandana, to be performed thrice daily, is obligatory on both the student and the householder. Daily worship of one's chosen deity is an additional duty of the householder.

A very important part of the daily functions of the householder consists of a set of fivefold duties called Pancha-Mahayajnas (five great sacrifices). The first of these is Brahma-Yajna or the sacrifice dedicated to the Vedas and their seers (Rishis) in the form of regular study (Svādhyaya) of the scriptures and the teaching of it to deserving students (Adhyāpana). The second is Deva-Yajna or the sacrifice offered to the celestial in the form of oblations poured into the sacred fire. The third is Pitri-Yajna or libations, etc. offered to

the ancestors. The fourth is Manushya-Yajna or the feeding of guests (atithi). The fifth is Bhuta-Yajna or the feeding of animals, especially cows and birds. These five functions are imperatives on every householder and are regarded as great sacrifices (MahāYajnas).

The ceremonies in the names of the dead have also great details, commencing with the rite of cremation and ending in the rites connected with the exaltation of the departed soul to the state of divine attainment.

Conclusion

While explaining the role of the Smritis, Swami Vivekananda said, "The ideal at one end is the Brahmin and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala, and the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmin. Slowly and slowly you find more and more privileges granted to them {by the Smritis}. ... Then gradually we find in other Smritis, especially in those that have full power now, that if the Shudras imitate the manner and customs of the Brahmins they do well, they ought to be encouraged. Thus it is going on. (CW, vol 3 - 295)"

Going through the succession of the Smritis, one can see that the lawgivers were conscious of the struggle for the upward mobility of the downtrodden through education and achievement. Whenever this mobility became irrepressible, the lawgivers made it legally and morally acceptable to all. It was thus that the yesterday's untouchable became a fit candidate for the knowledge of Brahman, the highest goal of human life.

In recent times Manu Smriti is blamed for creating caste based differences and also for being unfair towards lower castes and women. But most of these critics hardly read him, and those who read him, forget that Manu was just the chronicler and codifier of what existed in the society much earlier than Jesus Christ walked on this earth. Also, considering the fundamental thrust on purity, quality and stability by the Smriti writers, Manu was quite considerate towards all. Quoting Manu out of context, and out of time frame has been an unfair practice by his critics. Rather, Manu should be credited for creating an environment of spiritual growth for all, despite the steel frame of the social order.

Hindus have always been a socially conscious race since prehistoric times. That is how they have survived the tempests of time, attacks of the marauding tribes, temptations of materialism, and a sheer desire for revolution out of boredom. The little defect that the society has today is because proper adjustments were not made during the last thousand years or so. That is why Swami Vivekananda wanted a new Smriti to be written for the present age.

Tantra: Popularising Mother Worship

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

Hindu race has come to perceive God both as Impersonal and Personal.

More importantly, they believe that in His Personal aspect God can manifest His Power in any form. The manifestation of God's Power, including the Creation of universe, is never an act, as the term is commonly used, rather it is effected by His mere will, since God's will and its actualisation are same. God being pure consciousness, He is the repository of all strength, and hence He does not have to act through mind, senses, organs, and objects to materialise His will the way we have to do.

What might then happen if the Lord ever thinks of Himself as feminine? God being beyond the cause-effect phenomena, only a naive can define God as being mere this or that. God being Infinite and pure Consciousness, He can have a particular form, and also many other forms simultaneously, along with being formless. That is the true meaning of being Infinite. If He thinks of Himself as Boar or Fish, who can stop Him from manifesting in those forms, since His thinking and act are same.

There being no second -- superior or inferior -- to Him, He may very well think of Himself (rather Itself) as feminine too. After all, gender is a dividing characteristic of dualistic existence which can never apply to God. Tantra and Shakti worship are rooted in this concept of seeing the Divine as feminine.

Philosophy of Mother Worship

The idea of Mother worship comes from the Vedas, and was later elaborated in the Puranas. But the real growth of Mother Worship in India came from the Tantra traditions that influenced even the Puranas. In the present day Hinduism, Mother Worship mostly comes from the Puranic traditions, but their roots, and the mantras used in them have clear foot prints of Tantra.

Independent of the Puranic traditions, Tantras produced great sages who popularised it in certain sections of the society, but due to many reasons, Tantra practices could not be accepted, appreciated and absorbed in the mainstream Hinduism.

One chief reason for it was that unlike the Vedic systems, Tantras are highly esoteric, meaning that their practices are secret, and also that their texts have

layered meaning, and hence these cannot be understood unless a teacher trained in Tantra traditions explains them.

This kind of closed system is always dangerous for the practitioners and the onlookers alike. Be it a secretive person, a secret society, or a secret branch of knowledge – these can never be relied upon fully. The same happened with the Tantras – its esoteric nature made spiritually cultured wary of it, and so it throve mostly in the darkness of secrecy without the benefits of corrective adjustments that comes to an open system. However, the contribution of Tantras to Mother worship cannot be undermined.

Here it is important to remember that religions, religious systems and their outlooks are never a thought out system the way most philosophies are. Religions are the externals around the spiritual truths concerning God – the way He is, and the way He is perceived by the great sages in the depths of their meditation. A thought out religion like Akbar's Din e-Ilahi, or humanism are put to the bins of history faster than it took them to be gestated, and the truths represented by them are as replaceable as a man's clothes. But it is not so with religions that have withstood the test of time. The applications of the truths represented by them may be skewed, and the rationale to explain them may be flawed, but the spiritual truths that they represent cannot be questioned.

The principle behind Shakti/Mother worship is that God Creates the universe through His power which is non-different from Him, the way fire and its burning power are one and the same. This power of God is known as Shakti, which is non-different from God, and hence worshipping It is same as worshipping God.

Philosophically speaking, when God is in non-creative mode, He alone exists. At that time His Shakti stays merged in Him. But when He wills to manifest His Power, It appears as Creation. How and why God wills so, is a divine mystery that no religion can ever answer satisfactorily, since the dividing line of Mind-Time-Space separates the Absolute from the Relative.

This dividing line is called variously by different schools of philosophy. The Vedantins call it Maya, devotees call it Divine Play, while Shakti worshippers call it Shakti. The branching out of different philosophies in Hinduism is mostly due to their difference in perception of this dividing line between the Absolute and the Relative.

Creation by God is effected through Shakti. The difference between any two beings lies in the manifestation of Shakti in them, and even incarnations of God belong to the realm of Shakti, since their divine play is carried out in this world – the area of Shakti. Mahanirvan Tantra, an important work on Tantra

describes Shakti as, “Thou art the supreme Power of Brahman, and from Thee has sprung the whole Universe. You are its Mother. Whatever there is in this world, with or without motion, owes its origin to Thee, and is dependent on Thee. Thou art the Origin of all the manifestations; Thou art the birthplace of even Us (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva). Thou knowest the whole world, yet none know Thee.” (Mahananirvan Tantra 4.10-12)

This gives a fair idea about what Shakti worship is about. Of these Shakti worshippers, most prefer to address It as Mother due to the love and sweetness associated with one’s mother that can be felt at the cosmic level too.

What are Tantras?

The word 'tantra' in Sanskrit is from a root that may mean 'to spread', 'origination', and 'knowledge'. Thus 'Tantra' means 'the scripture by which knowledge is spread'. Some scholars also think that the word may have come by the combination of the words 'tattva' (the science of the cosmic principles of Samkhya) and 'mantra' (the science of the mystic sound), which implies that Tantra is the application of these two sciences to attain spiritual enlightenment.

According to the tradition, Tantra is believed to have been taught by the great Lord Shiva to his divine consort, the Shakti. The Lord begins by expounding the Vedanta, goes through the principles of Samkhya, and ends with Shiva Tantra.

The Tantras, in general, admit the validity of the rituals of the Vedas, the discrimination and renunciation of the Upanishads, the purifying disciplines of Raja-Yoga, and the passionate love for the Deity described in the Puranas. They exhort the sadhakas to exercise will and self-effort, practise self-surrender, and supplicate for divine grace. Tantras promise their followers not only enjoyment of worldly happiness but also liberation (bhoga and apavarga). The system acknowledges that the power of the Kundalini can be aroused by the sincere pursuit of any spiritual discipline, and that this arousal can bring infinite achievement in any individual.

In its specific meaning, Tantra is a system that makes use of ritual, energy work, the use of the gross to access the spiritual, and the identification of the micro with the macro. The Tantric practitioner seeks to use the divine power that flows through the universe (including his own body) to attain purposeful goals, both spiritual and material. It is a kind of experimental science in which realisation promised by it is an experimentally verifiable fact.

The great advantage of Tantra over other religious system was that it promised both enjoyment of life (bhoga), as well as spiritual upliftment (yoga) by doing the same kind of sadhana. An aspirant who wishes to get worldly success and enjoyment had only to make the necessary sankalpa (resolve), whereas the aspirant for mukti also could achieve his desired goal by just making the proper resolve.

This helped the common man embrace Tantra more and more. After all, a man wants to save both the worlds simultaneously.

The origin and growth of Tantras

Tantras grew independent of the Vedic traditions, and may even be earlier to it in its origin. Many estimate that the system must have started crystallising by the 5th century B.C. The real rise of Tantra came with the rise of Shaivism and the Pancharatra, while its necessary framework was supplied by the Samkhya philosophy. Both these religious systems and philosophy are quite old, which means that the seeds of Tantra were sown quite early in the evolution of the Hindu system of thought.

By the tenth century, Brahamanical, Buddhist and Jaina sects of Tantra got mixed up. This gave rise to a particular mystic form which was very near to Saktism in essence. This also gave birth to new forms of esoteric religions.

In its wider sense, Tantra is not a single coherent system like the Vedas, or any other Hindu philosophy. It is an accumulation of practices and ideas of the Hindus since prehistoric times till the present age. Its birth is rooted in the Vedas; its development proceeds through the Upanishads, Itihasa, Puranas and Smritis. It also drew from different practices current in India like Shaivism, and its philosophy came mostly from Samkhya (to be discussed in the section on Philosophy).

Later, some schools of Buddhism amalgamated their philosophy with Tantra to develop Vajrayana school of Buddhism. This school became popular in Tibet and later it entered India in its new avatar. The present day Tantra is thus a mix of Hindu and Buddhism traditions of Tantra rituals.

The later Tantric texts like Mahanirvan Tantra wanted to connect their doctrines with the Vedas but the orthodox Vedic tradition did not allow the proximity, even though both systems have much in common. But the Vedic traditions being all powerful in Hindu religion, Tantras had to remain satisfied with being on the sidelines even though it contributed significantly in its rites, rituals and modes of worship.

In spite of the slight faced by the Vedic tradition, Tantra grew partly due to the failure of the Vedic system in the changed times, and partly because it offered quick fix solutions to the need and greed of common man.

The requirements for Vedic rituals had become impractical -- the ingredients used in Vedic sacrifices were too difficult to obtain, the life-style prescribed for a practitioner became nearly impossible to follow, and the promised results of heavens after death seemed too distant. On the other hand, the Upanishadic meditations were too difficult for a common man to follow, and the Puranas appeared as tales of fantasy. But the devout needed something concrete, something simpler, and something glamorous for them to acquire worldly good, and to destroy their ill wishers. The answer was Tantra.

The vitality and elasticity thus acquired made Tantra enter every house and temple of India. As if this was not enough, it made powerful inroads in every country where an Indian, or an Indian thought went. What passes off today as practices of Hinduism in India and the West, is essentially Tantra, packaged to suit the need of a particular community or an individual.

Tantra and the Vedas

Going strictly by the definitions, Tantra is neither shruti, nor smriti. The followers of Tantra treat it as an integral part of the Vedas (Agama), though there are not many takers for this. Historically speaking, the Tantric tradition may be considered as either parallel to, or intertwined with the Vedic tradition. The later Tantric writers wanted to base their doctrines on the Vedas but the orthodox followers of the Vedic tradition referred to Tantra in a spirit of denunciation, stressing its anti-Vedic character.

The Tantras essentially teach what the Vedas also teach. The difference lies in the method and certain subtle points of philosophy. In the various works of Tantras, one repeatedly comes across passages where the supremacy of the Vedas is accepted, with the caveat that the present age is for the Tantras.

There are some great similarities between the two systems, of which only some are being mentioned:
* Both systems preach common goals of life.
* The Vedas concerned with the victory of man over the forces of nature. In the Tantric sadhana also the chief concern is the ascendancy of man over nature, both external and internal.
* Both these systems are highly ritualistic.
* The offering of Soma rasa was replaced by wine in the Tantras
* Both systems have various gods who are too willing to receive offerings and oblations.
* The animal sacrifice of the Vedas became an essential ritual in the Tantra.

Tantra and the Smritis

The Tantras look down upon the Smriti literature as inferior to itself. However, they draw heavily from the Smritis, with necessary additions and alterations.

Some interesting developments in Tantras as compared to the Smritis are:
* Tantras accept the Varna-Ashrama dharma, but add a fifth caste, called samanya. On the other hand it reduces the four ashramas to only two -- Grihastha and Sannyasa.
* With Brahmacharya and Vanaprastha removed from the system, the sixteen samskaras, prescribed in the Smritis are reduced to ten.
* The purificatory rites are reduced drastically.
* The status of the Shudras go up considerably.
* The practice of Sati got expressly prohibited.
* Penances (prayascitta) for various mistakes became much simple.
* Punishment for offences committed by a common man was made lighter.

The texts and the type of Tantras

The major sources of Tantras are the Agama, Yaamala, and the Buddhistic tradition. In the old books, there are mention of teachers like Dadhichi, Lakulisa, Kacha and others which show that this tradition is quite old and respected.

Geographically, there are four classes of Tantra: Kerala, Kashmira, Gauda, and Vilas, but their influence is not really confined to one region. With time they spread all over the country and got intertwined with each other.

<u>Agamas</u>

The Tantras are normally called both agama and nigama. In the agamas, Lord Shiva instructs Parvati, whereas in the nigamas, Parvati instructs Lord Shiva in the art of the Tantras. However, agama is the common term used for both of these.

The Agamas are theological treatises and practical manuals of the Tantras. The Agamas include the Tantras, Mantras and Yantras and also discuss Jnana, Yoga, Kriya or Ritual, and Charya or Worship. They also discuss metaphysics, cosmology, liberation, devotion, meditation, philosophy of Mantras, mystic diagrams, charms and spells, temple-building, image-making, domestic observances, social rules, public festivals etc.

The Agamas are divided into three sections: The Vaishnava, The Saiva and The Sakta.

The Vaishnava Tantras are of four kinds: The Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra, Pratishthasara, Vijnana-lalita. In this group there are 75 Tantras, 205 Upatantras, 20 kalpas, 1 Yamala etc.

The Saiva Tantras recognise 32 Tantras of which the chief is Kamika. In addition they have 325 Upatantras, 10 Samhitas, 2 Yamalas etc. These Agamas are also the basis of Kashmir Saivism which is called the Pratyabhijna system. The latter works of Pratyabhijna system show a distinct leaning to Advaitism (non-dualistic philosophy). The Southern Saivism, i.e., Saiva Siddhanta, and the Kashmir Saivism, regard these Agamas as their authority, besides the Vedas. Each Agama has Upa-Agamas (subsidiary Agamas). Of these, only fragmentary texts of twenty are available. Lord Siva is the central God in the Saiva Agamas.

The Sakta Agamas glorify Sakti as the World-Mother. They dwell on the Sakti (energy) aspect of God and prescribe numerous courses of ritualistic worship of the Divine Mother in various forms. There are seventy-seven Agamas. These are very much like the Puranas in some respects. The texts are usually in the form of dialogues between Siva and Parvati. In some of these, Siva answers the questions put by Parvati, while in others, Parvati answers and Siva questions.

The other Tantras are:
Saura Tantra with 30 Tantras, 96 Upatantras, 2 Yamalas etc.
Ganpatya Tantras have 50 Tantras, 25 Upatantras, , 8 pancharatras etc.
Bauddha Tantras which have a very large number of literature.
Mahanirvana, Kularnava, Kulasara, Prapanchasara, Tantraraja, Rudra-Yamala, Brahma-Yamala, Vishnu-Yamala and Todala Tantra are some of the important works. Among the existing books on the Agamas, the most famous are the Isvara-Samhita, Ahirbudhnya-Samhita, Sanatkumara-Samhita, Narada-Pancharatra, Spanda-Pradipika and the Mahanirvana-Tantra.

Yaamala

Another class of literature are known as Yaamala. These are eight in number and have the tradition of Bhairava, instead of the Lord Shiva. The most famous work of this group is Brahma Yamala.

Yamalas indicate a great development in the Tantric sadhana. These give a well-developed mode of worship, harmonise a lot of local deities and cults, make provision for sadhana by people of other castes also, and introduce a great variety of gods and goddesses. The major shift in these works, as compared to the Agama literature is the worship of Shakti instead of Lord Shiva.

These works preserve the orthodox tradition of the earlier period and also present themselves as heterodox.

Buddhist Tantras

These are the later group of literature which developed around 7th century A.D. Buddhist mysticism had assumed three different forms -- Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalacakrayana. The philosophical basis for these works was supplied by the Yogachara and the Madhyamika systems of philosophy. Vajrayana emphasises the importance of mantra, mudra, and mandala; Sahajayana discards all formalism; and Kalachakrayana attaches importance to muhurta, tithi, nakshtra etc., thus bringing the elements of astrology and astronomy in sadhana.

The Tantric Traditions

There are also Kaula tradition, started by Matsyendranath, in which the Sahaja tradition of the Buddhists finds a lot of importance.

The Natha tradition originated from the teachings of Siddhacharya, and was continued by the great teachers like Gorakshanatha.

The Vaishnava Sahjiya was established in Bengal before Chaitanyadeva. In this sect Radha is the Shakti, and Krishna is the Supreme Reality.

Avadhuta tradition has its roots in Natha sect, whereas Bauls of Bengal are inspired by the Vaishnava Sahajiya.

The Various Paths

The Tantra tradition gives a list of its various paths as: Vedachara, Vaishnavachara, Shaivachara, Dakshinachara, Vamachara, Siddhnatachara, and Kaulachara. These are classified as tamasik, rajasik, and Sattvic. The first three are for pashubhava people (explained below); Vamachara and Siddhantachara are for veerabhava practitioners; Dakshinachara is for pashubhava sadhaka who are struggling to reach veerabhava, and Kaulachara is for divyabhava aspirantas.

According to the Tantras, the first three cannot be practised because of the strict injunctions in them, and of the difficulties imposed by the Varnashrama dharma. For example, it is said that a brahmin engaged in a sacrifice must not look at the face of a shudra. But this is quite impossible in the prevailing social conditions. This leaves us with the remaining four. Of these, Vamachara and dakshinachara are more popular as Tantras.

The ignorance of the general public and the abuse by the irresponsible practitioners of Vamachara or 'left-hand' path, has made the whole science of Tantra suspect. The ritual of this path is based upon the principle of the 'return current', which seeks to reverse the process that creates the bonds of the animal man. The five ingredients used by followers of this path are the 'pancha makara' - mansa, matsya, madya, mudra, maithuna -- meat, fish, wine, fried cereals and union. These, however, have different connotations for different classes of aspirants. The underlying principle of Vamachara is to emphasize the fact that a man makes progress in spiritual life not by falsely shunning that which makes him fall, but by seizing upon it and sublimating it so as to make it a means of liberation.

It is only for a certain type of aspirant, called veera (heroic), that the actual drinking of wine and practice of union are prescribed. The teacher of such a practioner carefully points out that the joy and stimulation arising from these are to be utilised for the uplift of the mind from the physical plane. Tantra never countenances excess or irregularity for the purpose of the gratification of carnal desire. To break chastity, it says, is to lose or shorten life. Woman, associated with the Tantric practices in order to help man in his path of renunciation, is an object of veneration to all schools of Tantra. She is regarded as the embodiment of Sakti, or the power that projects and pervades the universe. To insult a woman is a grievous sin.

Same is true of meat-eating and wine drinking. The Tantras specifically prohibit people from indulging in these things excepting when offered to the Lord.

Mahanirvan Tantra explains the five "M' as being representative of the five great elements of Nature. According to this book, wine represents fire element, fish represents water element, meat represents air element, fried grains represent earth element, and union is the representative of the ether (akasa) element. By offering these to the Mother of the universe, one actually worships her through her creative elements.

Animal, Heroic and Divine

Tantra divides sadhakas, or spiritual aspirants, into three groups according to their mental disposition: pashu, veera, and divya -- animal, heroic, and divine. The man with animal disposition (pashu) moves along the outgoing current and earns merit and demerit from his worldly activities. He has not yet raised himself above the common round of convention, nor has he cut the three knots of 'hate, fear and shame.' Swayed by his passions, he is a slave of emotions: lust, greed, pride, anger, delusion, and envy. Such a sadhaka is not allowed even to touch the five ingredients of the left-hand ritual.
The competent aspirant for the hazardous ritual with the five ingredients is

called a hero (veera). He has the inner strength to 'play with fire' and to burn his worldly bonds with it. Established in complete self-control, he does not forget himself even in the most trying and tempting circumstances. He is a man of fearless disposition, inspiring terror in those who cherish animal propensities. Pure in motive, gentle in speech, strong in body, resourceful, courageous, intelligent, adventurous, and humble, he cherishes only what is good.

The sadhaka of divine (divya) disposition is one who has risen above all the bonds of desire and has nothing to sublimate. Mahanirvana Tantra describes such an aspirant as sparing in speech, beloved of all, introspective, steady, sagacious, and solicitous about others' welfare. He is always in ecstasy, enjoying 'inner woman and wine.' For the five ingredients used by a hero he substitutes consciousness (chit), bliss (ananda), and exaltation (bhava).

A Word on animal sacrifice

To many, the animal sacrifice, associated with the worship of Mother Kali and other such deities, is repulsive. While talking to Romain Rolland, Rabindranath Tagore also expressed his revulsion towards the worship of Kali for this reason. Even Swami Vivekananda says, "How I used to hate Kali! And all Her ways! That was the ground of my six years' fight--that I would not accept Her. But I had to accept Her at last! ... Sex-love and creation! These are at the root of most religions. And these in India are called Vaishnavism, and in the West Christianity. How few have dared to worship Death or Kali! Let us worship Death! Let us embrace the Terrible, because it is terrible, not asking that it be toned down. Let us take misery for misery's own sake!"

However, the sacrifices in Tantra are not mere killings the way a butcher or an abattoir kills animals for meat. In this system, it is presumed that a common man cannot rise above his desires, which includes meat eating. If a person has to do so, it is better that he takes meat as prasada. It is for this reason that animals are sacrificed. But before that pashu Gayatri is recited in the ears of the sacrificial goat, with the idea that the relevant mantra will release the animal from his species, and he will be born in some higher species to move towards the gaol of evolution, which is self realisation.
In Tantra, no female animal is ever sacrificed.

The Essential Philosophy

Reality, according to Tantra, is Satchidananda -- Existence, Knowledge, Bliss. Satchidananda becomes restricted through Maya, and its transcendental nature is then expressed in terms of forms and categories, as explained in Samkhya and other systems of Hindu philosophy.

According to the Vedanta philosophy, Maya functions only on the relative plane at the time of creation, preservation and destruction. Neither is the creation ultimately real, nor are the created beings real. True knowledge reveals only an undifferentiated consciousness. According to Tantra, however, Satchidananda is called Siva-Shakti, the hyphenated word suggesting that Siva or the Absolute, and Sakti, or its creative power, are eternally conjoined like a word and its meaning; and that the one cannot be thought of without the other. According to Tantra, a conception of pure consciousness which denies Shakti is only half of the truth. Satchidananda is essentially endowed with the power of self-evolution and self-involution. Therefore perfect spiritual knowledge is the knowledge of the whole: Of consciousness as being and consciousness as power to become.

In Tantra, it is only in the relative world that Siva and Sakti are thought of as separate entities. It also affirms that both the world process (Sristi) and the jiva are real and not merely illusory superimpositions upon Brahman. In declaring that the jiva finally becomes one with the Reality, Tantra differs from Visista Advaita.

According to Tantra, the non-dual reality becomes evolved, which is real and not merely apparent as in Vedanta. This evolution gives certain kind of powers and also restricts every form of existence (starting from a stone to human beings). This accounts for a being's actions and reactions. These determinants are the ‘fetters’ (pasa) which weave the whole fabric of the jiva’s phenomenal life. It is by them that one gets bound and behaves like an animal, (pasu).

The goal of Tantra is to teach the method by which these bondages (pasa) can be cut asunder to make every Jiva one with Shiva.

Mahanirvan Tantra emphasises the importance of kulachara (Tantra) for liberation in the present age. The kula (lit. total) are: Jiva, Prakriti, space, time, and the five great elements(akasha, air, fire, water, earth). The realisation that these nine are one with Brahman is Kulachara. This knowledge produces Dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

Tantra as a mode of sadhana

The Tantric sadhana is the method of transference of one's baser nature to the spiritual. In the Vedantic sadhana one has to negate all limiting adjuncts on the self accepting them as unreal until one realises Brahman. In order to reach the affirmation of oneness, one has to renounce the world of names and forms. On the other hand, Tantra prescribes the discipline of sublimation which consists of three phases: purification, elevation and the realisation. These require practices that can be classified as:

Ordinary Rituals

The ordinary ritual or puja may include any of the following elements:
a. Mantra and yantra: These play an important part in Tantra for invoking specific deities such as Shiva or Mother Kali.
b. Identification with deities: Tantra embraces every Hindu god and goddess. Thus each god in Tantra represents an aspect of the ultimate Para Shiva, or Brahman. These deities may be worshipped externally with flowers, incense, and other offerings; but, more importantly, are engaged as attributes of Ishta Devata. The practitioners either visualise the deities present within themselves, or try to feel their presence outside.

The Secret Rituals

The secret ritual (panchatattva, chakrapuja, and panchamakara) may include any or all of the elements of the ordinary ritual along with the elements of one of these three. These practices are conducted only in the presence of the initiated devotees.

Some important concepts used in Tantra sadhana are:
Purification: The evolution and involution go hand in hand. The power that created the world, and the bondages that are associated with it can be turned back to take the individual away from the world to liberation. The Tantra believes in the saying, ‘One must rise by that by which one falls’; ‘the very poison that kills becomes the elixir of life when used by the wise.’ The only question is how to transform the cardinal impulses for material enjoyment (bhoga) into spiritual experiences (Yoga)? If this can somehow be done, then jiva will undoubtedly become one with Shiva, the individual will definitely become pure.

Tantras admit the presence of a perennial conflict between the flesh and the spirit. The observance of moral and social conventions, however desirable on the plane of worldly existence, does not make a man different from an animal. But, when one realises that the whole process of creation, preservation, and destruction is but the manifestation of the lila, or sportive pleasure, of Siva-Sakti, one does not see anything carnal or gross in the universe. The special technique of the Tantric discipline is to transform the disintegrating force into the integrating one.

Every action, whether yielding pleasure or pain, fasten the chain upon the jiva with additional links. The hope of liberty lies in uncoiling the coil of nature that has closed upon it. This is called the ‘awakening’ of the Kundalini by which one moves from the plane of impure principles to that of pure principles.

Kundalini

The spiritual awakening of a sadhaka is described in Tantra by means of the Kundalini power. Properly understood, Kundalini is not something peculiar to Tantra, but the basis of the spiritual experiences described by all religious faiths. Every genuine spiritual experience, such as the seeing of light or a vision, or communion with the Deity, is only a manifestation of the ascent of the Kundalini.

In our common language, Kundalini can be equated with the infinite potential energy in every being, which releases only a very small amount of working energy for one's daily life. The coiled-up Kundalini is the central pivot upon which the whole complex apparatus of the body and mind moves and turns. Once the Kundalini is aroused, the whole of potential gets converted into the dynamic, like the release of energy during an atomic explosion.

The aim of waking the Kundalini is not the acquisition of greater power for the purpose of performing miraculous feats or the enjoyment of material pleasures; it is the realisation of Satchidananda.

Chakras

The passage of the awakened Kundalini lies through the Sushumna, which is the normally closed central nerve in the nervous system. A kind of hollow canal, the Sushumna passes through the spinal column connecting the base centre (muladhara) at the bottom of the spine with the centre at the cerebrum.

Tantra speaks of six centres (Chakras) through which Sushumna passes which look like different-coloured lotuses with varying numbers of petals. In the ordinary worldly person these centres (Chakras) are closed, and the lotuses droop down like buds. As the Kundalini rises through the Sushumna Canal and touches the centres, these buds turn upward as fully opened flowers and the aspirant obtains spiritual experiences.

Mantras

Mantras play an important part in the Tantric discipline. The word 'mantra' means, literally, ‘that which, when reflected upon, gives liberation.’ The Mantra is the sound equivalent of the Deity, that is to say, chit or Consciousness, whereas the external image is the material form of the Mantra. The sound-vibration is the first manifestation of chit and nearest to it. It is really intermediate between pure consciousness and the physical object, being neither absolutely immaterial like the former nor dense like the latter.

Tantra regards vibration as a manifestation of the cosmic energy, or Sakti, and teaches that as such it can lead to the realisation of chit, which otherwise eludes the grasp of even an intelligent person. Thus Mantras are not mere words, but are forms of concentrated thought of exceeding potency. The advanced aspirant finds that a Mantra and the deity with which it is associated are identical. The deity being the illumination embodied in the Mantra.

The mantras are also classified as masculine, feminine and neuter. Masculine mantras end in hum and phat; feminine mantras end in swaha, and neuter mantras end in namah.

Beeja

Beeja (lit. seed) plays a very important role in the Tantras. Just like Aum of the Vedas, these beeja are mystic sounds produced by the combination of various sounds. There are innumerable beeja, but the more popular ones are Aim (worship of Saraswati), Hrim (worship of maya), Shrim (worship of Lakshmi). Some of these beeja are masculine (eg. klim, denoting the god of desire), while most of them are feminine. The masculine beeja are called deva, whereas the feminine ones are called vidya.

Yantras (Mystical Diagrams)

Mystical diagrams called 'Yantras' are present in every religion, including Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, although known by different names. In Tantra, they are an essential component. A Yantra is a diagrammatic equivalent of the deity, just as Mantra is its sound-equivalent. It is a full representation of the basic power which evolves and maintains an object of worship. When the Yantra is given real potency, the Deity is present there. In the Tantric ritual the Yantra is the object of worship, the image being its tangible representation. There is a fundamental relationship between the Mantra and the Yantra.

Tantra insists that mantras are efficacious, that the diagrams used in the worship are potent, that the deities, or devatas, are conscious entities, that supernatural powers are attained, and that the earnest aspirant experiences the rise of the Kundalini through the different spinal centres (Chakras) and finally realises his identity with Satchidananda.

Tantric Ritual

Let us briefly consider a Tantric ritual as observed in the worship. The aim of Tantra is bhoga-apavarga -- enjoyment, and also liberation. It therefore lays down an endless variety of rituals suited to different times, places, and individual competence.

Usually a Tantric ritual consists in the assigning of the different parts of the body to different deities, the purifying of the elements of the body, breath-control, meditation, imparting of life to the image, and mental and physical worship. These are all calculated to transform the worshipper, the worshipped, the accessories, and the act of worship into consciousness. Harmony on the physical and mental planes are necessary for success in worship, which is created in the gross physical elements by means of prescribed postures, pranayama, japa, and meditation.

In addition, Ablution (snana) purifies the physical body, tarpana gives inner satisfaction, bhutasuddhi frees one of taints, and dhyana enables the worshipper to feel his oneness with the Deity. The last part of the ritual consists of a sacrifice (homa) in which the devotee completely surrenders himself to the Deity, merges in him, and loses his identity in him. At this stage there is no more distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped, the finite and the infinite, the individual and the Absolute.

Realisation

When a sadhaka attains the purity of mind through the ritualistic worship as prescribed in the Tantras, he becomes fit for the realisation of Brahman. It is then that an aspirant finds that the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation are all one.

Tantra as a complete Shastra

Unlike many other spiritual treatise, Tantras are a complete scripture. They discuss philosophy; the form and the function of Varnashrama dharma; duties, responsibilities and penances for the individual; code of conduct to lead the daily life etc. A true follower of Tantra did not need to go to any other dharmashastra for enlightenment.

Works like Mahanirvan Tantra condemned satee, encouraged female education, simplified purificatory rites, and encouraged a life of simplicity and purity. The Tantras reduced the samskaras (ceremonial rites) to ten, instead of the earlier sixteen of the Smritis, and reduced the number of ashrama to two, instead of the earlier four.

Conclusion

Tantra successfully worked out the coordination between karma, jnana, bhakti and yoga to be used by its practitioners for his or her ultimate union with the Supreme Reality.

Being a product of the spiritual cross-currents of Hinduism, it sucked everything connected with religion that was to be found anywhere in India. In turn, it spewed out everything that was beneficial for the mankind. Despite the blemishes and abuses that it received, it continues to give solace to every practising Hindu in its ritualistic, philosophical, and mystic aspects. The concept of transference developed by it is unique in the history of world religions. It is this transference, or sublimation which made millions of materialistic minds to attain a semblance of upliftment.

May be, that is why it continues to exist in one form or the other.

Upanishads – An Introduction

By P. R. Ramachander

General Introduction
"Upanishad means the inner or mystic teaching. The term Upanishad is derived from upa (near), ni (down) and s(h)ad (to sit), i.e., sitting down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret doctrine. In the quietude of the forest hermitages the Upanishad thinkers pondered on the problems of deepest concerns and communicated their knowledge to fit pupils near them. Sankara derives the word Upanishad as a substitute from the root sad, 'to loosen', 'to reach' or 'to destroy' with Upa and ni as prefixes and kvip as termination. If this determination is accepted, Upanishad means brahma-knowledge by which ignorance is loosened or destroyed. Upanishads are found in the concluding sections of Vedas and are classified as Vedanta or the end of the Vedas. There are five Vedas with Yajur Veda having two versions. Each of these five books has several Saaakas (Branches). Each Saaka has a Karma Khanda dealing with the actions to be performed and is made up of Mantras and Brahmanaas. The later deals with Upasana or meditation and has Aranyakas inside them for the benefit of those who have resorted to the quiet habitat of the forest to pursue their spiritual Quest.

The Upanishads are found mostly in the Aranyaka section of the Vedas. The five Vedas have 1180 Saaakas and thus there should be 1180 Upanishads. But what we have now with us is a collection of 108 Upanishads. The list of these 108 Upanishads is given in the Mukthikopanishad.

Out of the 108 Upanishads only 10 have been commented upon by several Acharyas like Adi Sankara. These are Isavasya, Kena, Katha, Aitareya, Brihadaranyaka, Prasna, Mandukya, Taittriya, Chandogya and Mundaka. These have also been popularized by many savants like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Chinmayananda. They all deal with highest category of philosophy and metaphysics. So there is a general impression that all Upanishads are texts of Hindu Philosophy. This is not true. There are Upanishads which even tell you how to wear the sacred ash, how to worship a particular God and so on. But majority of them deal with methods of Yoga and Renunciation (Sanyasa).

Vedas and Upanishads:
"The breakdown among the 108 Upanishads according to the 5 Vedas are as follows:
1. Rig Veda: 10
2. Sama Veda: 16

3. Atharva Veda: 31
4. Krishna Yajur Veda: 32
5. Sukla Yajur Veda: 19

Rig Veda Upanishads [10]:
1. Aitareya 2. Kaushitaki 3. Nadabindu 4. Atmabodha 5. Nirvana 6. Mudgala 7. Akshamala 8. Tripura 9. Saubhagyalakshmi and 10. Bahvracha.

Sama Veda Upanishads [16]:
1. Kena 2. Chhandogya 3. Arunika 4. Maitrayani 5. Maitreyi 6. Vajrasuchi 7. Yogachudamani 8. Vasudeva 9. Mahat 10. Sanyasa 11. Avyakta 12. Kundika 13. Savitri 14. Rudrakshajabal 15. Jabaladarsana and 16. Jabali.

Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads [19]:
1. Isavasya 2. Brahadaranyaka 3. Jabala 4. Hamsa 5. ParamaHamsa 6. Subala 7. Mantrika 8. Niralamba 9. Trisikhibrahmana 10. Mandalabrahmana 11. Advayataraka 12. Paingala 13. Bhikshuka 14. Turiyatita 15. Adhyatma 16. Yajnavalkya 17. Satyayani 18. Tarasara and 19. Muktika.

Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads [32]:
1. Katha 2. Taittiriya 3. Brahma 4. Kaivalya 5. Svetasvatara 6. Garbha 7. Narayana 8. Amritabindhu 9. Amritanada 10. Kalagnirudra 11. Kshurika 12. Sarvasara 13. Sukharahasya 14. Tejobindhu 15. Dhyanabindhu 16. Brahmavidya 17. Yogatattva 18. Dakshinamurti 19. Skanda 20. Sariraka 21. Yogasikha 22. Ekakshara 23. Akshi 24. Avadhuta 25. Katharudra 26. Rudrahrudhaya 27. Yogakundalini 28. Panchabrahma 29. Pranaagnihotra 30. Varaha 31. Kalisantaranaand 32. Sarasvatirahasya.

Atharva Veda Upanishads [31]:
1. Prasna 2. Mundaka 3. Maandukya 4. Atharvasira 5. Atharvasikha 6. Brahajjabala 7. Nrsimhatapini 8. Narada Parivrajaka 9. Sita 10. Sarabha 11. Tribadvibhutimahanarayana 12. Ramarahasya 13. Ramatapini 14. Sandilya 15. Paramahamsaparivrajaka 16. Annapurna 17. Surya 18. Atma 19. Pasupatabrahma 20. Parabrahma 21. Tripuratapini 22. Devi 23. Bhavana 24. Bhasmajabala 25. Ganapati 26. Mahavakhya 27. Gopalatapini 28. Krishna 29. Hayagriva 30. Dattatreya and 31. Garuda."

Major Upanishads
The ten major Upanishads which contain great philosophical discussions and knowledge are:

1. Ishavasya Upanishad
It is one of the great but brief Upanishad. It gives the summary of Indian philosophy very succinctly. It reviews the whole life and comes out with explanations.

2. Kena Upanishad

Kenopanishad derives its name from the first word Kena, meaning ‘by whom’. It belongs to the Talavakara Bahmana of Sama Veda and is therefore also referred to as Talavakara Upanishad. In short it says that "The One Power that illumines everything and everyone is indivisible. It is the Ear behind the ears, Mind behind the mind, Speech behind speech, Vital Life behind life. The ears cannot hear it; it is what makes the ears hear. The eyes cannot see it; it is what makes the eyes see. You cannot speak about it; it is what makes you speak. The mind cannot imagine it; it is what makes the mind think. It is different from what all we know; yet it is not known either. Those who feel they know Him, know Him not. Those who know that anything amenable to the senses is not Brahman, they know it best when it is known as the innermost witness of all cognitions, whether sensation, perception or thought, then it is known. One who knows thus reaches immortality".

3. Kathopanishad

"The Kathopanishad is divided into six Vallis. Valli literally means a creeper. A Valli, like a creeper, is attached to the Sakhas or Branches of the Veda. This Upanishad is also divided into two Adhyayas (chapters) of three Vallis each. "This is one of the most beautiful Upanishads in which the eternal truths are given in the form of a narrative. The narrative is taken from Taittiriya Brahmana (3-11-8) with some variation. The same story is told in the Taittiriya Brahmana, only with this difference that in the Brahmana freedom from death and birth is obtained by a peculiar performance of a sacrifice, while in the Upanishad it is obtained by knowledge only."

4. Aitareya Upanishad

The Aitareya Upanishad is one of the oldest of the Upanishads. It belongs to the Aitareya Aranyaka of the Rig-Veda. It is divided into three chapters and contains 33 verses. The Upanishad deals with the process of creation.

5. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

"Brihadaranyaka Upanishad means the 'great forest-book'. This Upanishad is one of the oldest of all the Upanishads. It consists of three sections or kandas: the Madhu kanda, the Yajnavalkya or the Muni kanda and the Khila kanda. Here the Brahman is portrayed as universal and undifferentiated consciousness. The doctrine of the indescribability of the absolute and the doctrine of 'Neti, Neti' are explained. This Upanishad concludes by stating the three virtues that one should practice i.e. self-restraint, giving, and compassion."

6. Prasna Upanishad

"In Sanskrit, Prashna mean question. This book consists of six questions and their answers, hence the name. It is in the form of question-answers. Except first and last questions, all other questions are actually a group of smaller

sub-questions. As narrated in the beginning of this Upanishad, Six pupils interested in knowing divinity or Brahman come to sage Pippalada and ask questions of great spiritual importance. Pippalada asks them to take up penance of one year. Upon completion of penance, they again come to sage and ask questions, then the sage answers their questions."

7. Mandukya Upanishad

"For the very reason that it explains the esoteric meaning of the fundamental syllable Aum of Hindu spiritual tradition, the Upanishad has been extolled greatly. The Muktikopanishad which talks about all other Upanishads, says that if a person cannot afford to study all the hundred and more Upanishads, it will be enough to read just the Mandukya Upanishad. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in this Upanishad we find the fundamental approach to the attainment of reality by the road of introversion and ascent from the sensible and changing, through the mind which dreams, through the soul which thinks, to the divine within but above the soul."

8. Taittireeya Upanishad

"The Taittiriya Upanishad belongs to the Taittiriya school of the Yajur Veda. It is divided into three sections called Vallis. The first is the Siksa Valli. Siksa is the first of the six Vedangas (limbs or auxiliaries of the Veda); it is the science of phonetics and pronunciation. The second is the Brahmananda Valli and the third is the Bhrugu Valli. These two deal with the knowledge of the Supreme Self, paramatma-jnana."

9. Chandogya Upanishad

"Along with Brihadaranyaka Upanishad the Chandogyopanishad is an ancient source of principal fundamentals for Vedanta philosophy. Considering number of references made to this Upanishad in Brahma sutras, it indicates special importance of this Upanishad in Vedanta philosophy. Important spiritual practices like Dahara vidya, Shandilya vidya, etc. are its specialty."

10. Mundakopanishad

"This Upanishad begins with an Invocation, praying that eye may see auspicious things, the ear may hear auspicious sounds, and that life may be spent in the contemplation of the Lord. The teaching of this Upanishad is referred to as Brahmavidya, either because it describes first the message of Hiranyagarbha, the casual Brahma, or because the message relates the glory of Brahman. This Upanishad speaks of Brahmavidya as the mystery which only those with shaven heads and those who go through a rite of having Fire on the shaven head can understand. So, it is called Mundaka, or shaven Head. Apart from this, this Upanishad is honoured as the crest of all, since it expounds the very essence of Brahma Jnana. It is assigned to the Fourth Veda, the Atharvana."

(The write up about the ten major Upanishads has been taken from various web sites. My indebtedness to those great souls is acknowledged.)

The other 98 Upanishads are again classified according to their content as follows.

They are General (of common interest), Saiva (dealing with Lord Shiva), Saktha (dealing with the divine mother Shakthi), Vaishnava (dealing with Lord Vishnu), Sanyasa (dealing with renunciation) and Yoga (dealing with Yogic practices) Upanishads. Though classification is made, still there is some overlapping in the subjects dealt with. Short notes on each of these Upanishads category wise are given below:

General Upanishads (27)

Svetasvatara Upanishad

This Upanishad is taught by a sage called Svetasvatara. More emphasis is given in teaching of Sankhya yoga and the philosophy of illusion (Maya).

Garbha Upanishad

This Upanishad is by sage Pippalada and deals with the growth of foetus in the womb. It also gives the number of different parts of the body like bones, nerves, flesh etc.

Maitrayani Upanishad

This Upanishad tells us about the penance of a king called Brahadratha. The king asks the sage Sakanya about the feeling of desire in this meaningless world. Sage Sakanya relates him, what has been told to him by sage Maithreya. He teaches him the great science of Brahma Vidya. And tells him finally that mind and illusion are responsible for this contradiction.

Kaushitaki Upanishad

This Upanishad is taught by sage Chithra to sage Udhalaka and his son Shwethakethu. It deals about the science of soul. The temporary nature of rituals and good deeds and permanent nature of doing everything without desire is emphasized. It also tells the need for a father to give up all his personality and knowledge to his son and enter Sanyasa.

Subala Upanishad

This is the teaching of Sage Angiras to sage Raikwa. It tries to answer the question of the time and method of creation of the world. It also tries to find out the properties of the soul of beings. And has several aspects of philosophy.

Mantrika Upanishad
Deals about the properties of Brahman. Tells that whatever is produced vanishes and then is reproduced. Concludes that the one who knows it well is the Brahman.

Sarva Sara Upanishad
Defines and explains several words like Katha, Bandha, Annamaya etc., which occur constantly in Upanishadic philosophy.

Niralamba Upanishad
It is an independent text of Hindu philosophy. It tries to investigate what is Brahman and concludes that the Sanyasi by following proper methods has a better chance of attaining salvation.

Suka Rahasya Upanishad
This Upanishad is supposed to be taught to sage Suka so that he would understand the philosophy of salvation. The explanations of words and ideas are extensive.

Vajrasuchika Upanishad
This Upanishad investigates and tries to answer the question, "Who is a Brahmin? It says that caste does not come by birth.

Atma Prabodha Upanishad
Tells us about meditation on Pranava and the great Vaishnava mantra "Om Narayanaya Nama". Defines and tells about the identities of an evolved soul.

Skanda Upanishad
Takes a conciliatory stand between Shaiva and Vaishnava. Tells that both are same.

Mudgala Upanishad
This Upanishad aims at explaining the mantras of the great Purusha Suktham.

Paingala Upanishad
This is taught by sage Yagnavalkya to sage Paingala. It gives an explanation of the term 'Kaivalya'. It also attempts to explain the Maha Vakyas of Vedas like 'Aham Brahmasmi' as well the duties of Jnanis.

Mahat Upanishad
Tells about the initial creation of the universe starting From Lord Narayana till Lord Brahma. After this there is discussion between sage Suka and the king Janaka regarding the creation of the Samsara. This is followed by discussion of several aspects of philosophy between Sage Nidhaka and his Guru Sage

Ripu. It tells that Sastras are burden for a Jnani, Jnana is a burden to those who are attached and so on.

Sariraka Upanishad
Tells us about the different aspects of the human body, including states of knowledge.

Aksha Malika Upanishad
This Upanishad is taught by Guha to Lord Brahma. It tells us in detail about how to choose the mala (rosary) for use in meditation.

Ekakshara Upanishad
This is an Upanishad which deals with the letter 'Om'. This is more of a prayer towards 'Om'.

Surya Upanishad
Tells us about Surya Angirasa mantra and Gayatri which is a prayer to the Sun. Tells also about the ashtakshara to worship Lord Surya.

Akshi Upanishad
Contains the prayer of sage Sankruthi to Lord Surya which contains the Chakshushmathi mantra. This is followed by teaching of Brahma Vidya by Surya.

Adhyatma Upanishad
This is initially taught by Sadashiva to sage Apantharathamas. Tells that there is nothing but Athma and the feeling of existence of others is only illusion.

Savitri Upanishad
Tells us who is Savithri and the difference between Savitha and Savithri. Also gives the Savithri mantra.

Atma Upanishad
Deals with various aspects of Athma and how a Brahma Jnani does not see any other thing except Athma.

Kata Rudra Upanishad.
This is teaching of Brahma Vidya by Lord Brahma himself to the Devas. The treatment is philosophical.

Pancha Brahma Upanishad
Details the five stages by which Para Brahman was evolved.

Pranaagnihotra Upanishad
This Upanishad deals with the sarera Yagna or the sacrifice to the body. Tells what all mantras are to be chanted before taking food. The usual mantras that a Brahmin chants while taking food are contained in this Upanishad.

Muktika Upanishad
This Upanishad is the Teaching of Lord Rama to Hanuman. It tells about Vedas, Vedangas and also Kaivalya and also summarizes the Hindu Vedanta. The list of 108 Upanishads is given in this Upanishad.

Saiva Upanishads (13)

Kaivalya Upanishad
In this Brahma teaches the knowledge of Brahman to sage Aswalayana. Though Adhi Sankara wrote commentaries only for ten Upanishads, he considered this also as an important Upanishad. It deals with the state where the person is himself. The path shown is through meditation and devotion. Keeping the person as the plank and considering OM as the stick which rotates on the plank and gives out the light of fire.

Atharvasira Upanishad
It emphasizes about the greatness of the holy letter "om". It also tells that the form of lord Rudhra is the form of Pranava.

Atharvasikha Upanishad
This is taught by Sage Adharva to great sages like Pippaladha, Angiras and Sanathkumara. It emphasizes on the need and benefits on the meditation of the Pranava.

Brahat Jabala Upanishad
This Upanishad is told by Kalagni Rudra to sage Busundi. It deals in detail about the method of preparation of holy ash (Vibhuthi) and method of wearing it.

Kaalagni Rudra Upanishad
It tells in detail about the method of wearing holy ash (Vibhuthi) along with mantras for wearing the same. This is taught by Kalagni Rudra to the great sage Sanathkumara.

Dakshinamurthi Upanishad
Dakshinamurthy is the teacher form of Shiva. He teaches without talking. This Upanishad gives the Dakshinamurthi mantra and the method of practicing it

Sarabha Upanishad
Sarabha is the animal, man and bird form of Lord Shiva. It is believed that he took this form to control the anger of Vishnu when he took the form of Narasimha. This Upanishad tells about Lord Sarabha.

Pasupathabramopanishad.
Tells us lord Shiva's aspect of Pasupathi (the lord of all living things). Tells how that the entire universe is really one and there is no differentiation.

Rudra Hrudaya Upanishad
Shuka asks his father which God exists in all devas and in which God all devas exist. The answer is this Upanishad. He tells that it is Rudra.

Bhasma Jabala Upanishad
Tells about how Vibhuthi has to be prepared and also the daily duties of a Brahmana. This is the teaching Lord Shiva to Jabala Busunda.

Rudraksha Jabala Upanishad
This is the teaching of Kalagni Rudra to sage Busunda. And deals exclusively about Rudraksha.

Ganapati Upanishad
Starts with a prayer to Lord Ganapathy and gives the Ganapathy mantra. Tells how worship of Ganapathy is to be done.

Jabali Upanishad
Sage Jabali tells sage Pippalada about lord Pasupathi. The need and method of wearing Vibhuti (Holy ash) is given in detail.

<u>Saktha Upanishads</u> (9)

Sita Upanishad
Brahma tells the Devas about who is Sita. He tells them that she is the Adhara Shakthi (the basis which is the foundation) in the feminine form. Tells also about her different forms.

Tripura Tapini Upanishad
Tells about the Sathakshari mantra for meditating on Tripura, the Goddess Parvathy. Several great manthras like Gayatry, and Panchadasakshari are a part of this. Tells about Srividya Upasana.

Annapurna Upanishad
Sage Rupu tells sage Nidhaka about Devi Annapurna. He also teaches him the Annapurna mantra. This is followed by teaching of philosophical aspects like maya, Yoga and Mukthi.

Devi Upanishad
The Devi tells the devas who she is in this Upanishad. Tells about Panchadasakshari and Navakshari mantras to worship her.

Tripura Upanishad
Tells about Sri Chakra and the worship of the devi through the right and left methods.

Bhavana Upanishad
Tells one important aspect of Sri Vidya Upasana.

Saubhagya Lakshmi Upanishad
Bhagawan Narayana tells about the Shakthi from whom every God originated and teaches the devas, the worship of sowbhagya Lakshmi.

Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad
This Upanishad is taught by Sage Asvalayana to other sages. He teaches them the ten Saraswathi mantras and methods of worshipping her.

Bahuvracha Upanishad
Talks in detail about the existence of Shakthi from whom all gods and knowledge originated. Gives hints of worship of Sri Vidhya.

Vaishnava Upanishads (14)

Narayana Upanishad
Describes the principle of Tripath Narayana. It also introduces the Narayana ashtakshara mantra and describes the benefits of chanting it.

Nrsimha Tapini Upanishad
It has two parts. In the poorva part, it tells in detail about the greatness of Lord Naraimha. It also has the great king of Mantras called Narasimha mantra and tells in detail how to meditate on it. In the Uthara part it tells also about the greatness of Pranava and the Narsimha Raja Mantra. It gives detailed method of meditating on Lord Narasimha.

Tripadvibhuti Maha Narayana Upanishad
Brahma did Thapas for 1000 years to know from Lord Vishnu about Brahman. This is what Lord Vishnu told him. Also clears his doubts such as Brahman having a form and not having a form etc. Also gives the shapes of several yantras.

Rama Rahasya Upanishad
Tells that Lord Rama is Brahma Taraka and expounds various mantras for worshipping him. Also gives yantras for worshipping Lord Rama.

Rama Tapini Upanishad
There are two parts, the poorva Thapini and the second Uthara Thapini. Tells about the greatness of the word "Rama". Tells about the Rama Yantra, which is similar to the Sri Chakra. Tells also the belief that 'Lord Shiva tells the Tharaka mantra in the ears of all people dying in Varanasi' and the method of worship of Rama.

Vasudeva Upanishad
Tells about what is UrdhwaPundra (the sign worn by Vaishnavites) and the rules for wearing it.

Avyakta Upanishad
Deals about the creation of clearly defined things from that unclear past. Tells how Parajapati came from Avayaktha and went on to create the world. Gives a mantra to worship Lord Vishnu.

Tarasara Upanishad
Tells about holiness of Kurukshethra, Tharaka mantra and pranava. Tells method of worship of Lord Narayana.

Gopala Tapini Upanishad
Sages approach Lord Brahma to know the procedure to worship Krishna. What he tells them is contained in this Upanishad. The upasana mantra of Govinda is given.

Krishna Upanishad
The sages when they meet Rama wanted to embrace him. He made them to be born as Gopis and he took the avatara of Krishna, so that they can embrace him. This book tells as to who were born as what in Krishnavatara.

Hayagreeva Upanishad
Brahma tells Narada that whoever meditates and worships Lord Hayagreeva gets to know the Brahma vidya. The mantra for worship of Lord Hayagreeva is given.

Datatreya Upanishad
Tells the method of meditation and worship of Dathathreya. The Dathathreya mantra is given.

Garuda Upanishad
The method of meditation and worship of Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu is given.

Kali Santarana Upanishad
Tells about how the evils of kali age is to be crossed. The sixteen letter prayer on Rama would help one in doing this.

Sanyasa Upanishads (16)

Brahma Upanishad

Tells us about how the great sage of wisdom comes out of all mundane things and lives a life where there is no need for rituals and no differences exist. The mantra for changing Yagnopavita occurs in this Upanishad.

Jabala Upanishad

This Upanishad was compiled by Sage Jabala. This gives more emphasis on mediation and the chanting of Rudra. The greatness of concentrating between the centres of eyes is stressed here.

Arunya Upanishad

This Upanishad deals about the teaching of Prajapathi to sage Aaruni. It gives in detail the rules of life to be followed by a Brahmachari and a Sanyasi.

Paramahamsa Upanishad

It deals about the discussion between Sage Narada and God on who is a paramahamsa (sanyasi at an advanced stage) and methods to identify him.

Maitreyi Upanishad

It is the teaching of Lord Parameshwara to sage Maithreya. To a large extent, what is given in Maithrayani Upanishad is repeated. In addition God tells to him in detail about his formless form.

Nirvana Upanishad

Details about the Sanyasa marga involving Nirvana (nudity). Tells about how the people follow it.

Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad

This is the teaching of Narada to the Souunaka Sages. It tells about the methods to attain salvation, the rules to be followed by a Sanyasi, and the time when a person should enter Sanyasa. It also talks about Karma Sanyasa.

Bhikshuka Upanishad

It defines the different types of Sanyasi like Kuttesaka, Bahoodhaka, Hamsa and Parama Hamsa .

Turiyatita Upanishad

It is taught by Lord Narayana to Lord Brahma and tells us about the rules of the life of an Avadhootha.

Sanyasa Upanishad

Tells who can take Sanyasa and what is the procedure.

Paramahamsa Parivrajaka Upanishad
This is taught by Lord Narayana to Lord Brahma. It deals mainly about the procedure of taking sanyasa.

Kundika Upanishad
Tells what al things a Sanyasi should possess. And how he should behave.

Parabrahma Upanishad
Tells what is Yagnopavitha as well as Shika, for the sanyasis as well as people of the world. Gives clearly the total length of the Upavitha. For the sanyasi it is the pranava which acts as Yagnopavitha and Shika.

Avadhuta Upanishad
Dattatreya teaches sage Sankrithi as to who is Avadhootha and how he should behave.

Yajnavalkya Upanishad
The Upanishad tells when to assume sanyasa and also the properties of a sanyasi.

Saatyayani Upanishad
Mind becomes the reason for attachment and salvation. Tells that a real Brahmin should search for Brahman. Also tells that one taking sanyasa gives redemption for three generation of manes.

<u>Yoga Upanishads</u> (19)

Shwethaswadhara Upanishad
This Upanishad is taught by a sage called Swethaswadhara. More emphasis is given in teaching Sankhya yoga and the philosophy of illusion (Maya).

Hamsopanishad
This talks about meditation on Hamsa mantra and is being taught by sage Gauthama to sage Sanathkumara. The method of meditating on the Hamsa mantra is fully described.

Amrutha Bindu Upanishad
It gives the knowledge of athma in the tasty form of nectar and gives it as briefly as a dot. It tells us about what is Brahman and other concepts of hard core Hindu Philosophy.

Amrutha Nadopanishad
This describes the way and detailed method to chant the holy letter "OM', which is called here as the nectar like letter.

Kshurikoupanishad.
Kshrika means knife. It is so called because it cuts ignorance using the knife of wisdom. This is a Upanishad which in detail tells about Yoga and its practice.

Thejo Bindupanishad
This Upanishad is the teaching of Lord Paramashiva to his son Subrahmanya. Talks in detail about Yogic practices, defines Chinmathra Swaroopa, Athmanubhava, Jeevan Muktha etc.

Nada Bindu Upanishad
Tells in detail about the meditation on Omkara (pranava). The method of meditation and some problems which may occur are pointed out.

Dhyana Bindu Upanishad
The meditation on Pranava and Ajabha Gayathri is dealt in detail along with the method involved.

Brahma Vidhya Upanishad
Teaches methods of attaining Brahma through meditation. Emphasizes role of Guru. Tells that Sruthi is more important than pramana.

Yoga Thathwopanishad
This is the teaching of Lord Vishnu to Lord Brahma. It details out the yogic practice. It also tells about the stages in yoga, defines them and tells how to recognize them.

Trisiki Brahmanopanishad
This is the teaching of Lord Soorya to a Brahmin called Trishiki Brahmana. He clears his doubts about the definition of the body, soul, Karana and yogic practice.

Yoga Choodamani Upanishad
Tells about Yogic practice involving Ajaba Gayatri. Tells about the seats of yoga, tells how to wake up the Kundalani and reach her up to Brahma Randra.

Mandala Brahmanopanishad
This is the teaching of Sun God to his disciple Yagna Valkya. This deals with the principle of the soul through yogic practice. Definitions of various terms used in Yoga is also given. Tells in detail about Yogic practice and tells us about what is Sambhavi Mudhra.

Sandilyopanishad
This is taught by sage Atharvana to sage Sandilya. It deals with Ashtangayoga and Brahma Vidhya.

Yogashikopanishad
This is the teaching of Lord Maheswara to Lord Brahma. It deals with subjects like Mukthi, Shakthi, Nadha, Chaithanya and Yoga.

Yoga Kudalini Upanishad
Tells about Kundalani and yogic practice.

Jabaladarsanopanishad
This is the teaching of Lord Dattatreya to his disciple sage Sankriti. And tells how the yoga should be done in detail.

Mahavakyopanishad
Confirms that the knowledge "That this Sun is Brahma" would be realized by chanting of Ajaba Gayathri. Tells what is the merger of mind with Brahman.

Varahopanishad
Tells about the Brahma Vidya of the body of Varaha. Lord Vishnu as Varaha tells how he should be meditated upon and worshipped. Also deals in detail about the stages of yoga.

Note:
1. The classification is modified but based on the writings of Sri Sadagopan in his communication to the Prapathi group.
2. All sentences within quotes are quotations from various web sites dealing with Upanishads.

An Overview of the Upanishads

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

What are the Upanishads?

The Upanishads are the science of freedom through the knowledge of one's true self.

The Vedas show the way to a blessed life by consecrating one's actions, and they also reveal the science of freedom (mukti) from the world through spiritual efforts. In practice, however, the Vedas were identified with yajna that was believed to produce earthly and heavenly good. This was not to the liking of many whose spiritual urges were not to sate by the heavens and rebirths, which were after all an extension of present existence only. They wanted a more direct approach to spiritual wisdom, bereft of the paraphernalia associated with rituals. That need was fulfilled by the Upanishads.

The Vedas also had the problem of excess. One had to spend the better part of one's life (around 32 years) mastering them! So the Upanishads replaced them as a direct approach to the Divine. With time the Upanishads too grew in large numbers, but as a system of knowledge these never became an overgrown system, since one does not have to read all the Upanishads to make use of them. If one knows any one Upanishad properly, he knows the essence of all the other Upanishads. This gives the Upanishads tremendous vitality, along with the age-old stability—something unusual in the history of human knowledge.

The last sections of each of the four Vedas are known as Upanishad. Since these come at the end of the Vedas, they are known as Vedanta. The term can also be interpreted to mean 'the essence of the Vedas'. The Vedantins treat the Upanishads in this sense only. According to them, the rituals and other subject matter of the Vedas are the preparatory grounds for the final climb to the spiritual truths as presented in the Upanishads.

It is difficult to say how many Upanishads there are. The number is put anywhere between 108 and 1008. Acharya Shankara (c. 8th century), the great unifier of Hindu system of thought, has commented upon eleven principal Upanishads, and has referred to a few more in his commentaries. These Upanishads are respected more than others.

The Upanishads are not easy to understand without a commentary and a proper teacher. The truths presented in the Upanishads (these are not philosophical speculations) are so subtle and profound that only those with extremely sharp and penetrating minds can grasp them fully.

Brahman

The sages realised the Divine as pure consciousness which was the reality beneath all existence. They called it Brahman (the Great) which had no qualifying traits, no attribute, no form, etc. This came to be known as nirguna Brahman, the impersonal God, who is ever present and everywhere present God for whom no adjective can be employed. The subject of discussion in every Upanishad is this. He (or, it) is infinite, ever free, without a form, and beyond the grasp of the human mind. He cannot be called a knowing being, because knowledge belongs to the human mind; he cannot be called a reasoning being, because reasoning is a sign of weakness; he cannot be called a creating being, because none creates except in bondage. The Upanishads describe Brahman as beyond subject-object duality. It is beyond good and bad, and virtue and vice. Brahman is sat (existence), chit (consciousness), and ananda (bliss), since it exists, it is consciousness, and is full of bliss

To know this truth, one has to become one with it, 'The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman'. The triad of knower-knowledge known disappears in that state, and what remains, remains. Only those who have experienced that state know its true nature. But even they cannot describe it for reasons described above. When this reality is perceived through the mind, it appears as having qualities and attributes, and hence it is known as saguna Brahman (God with qualities). This is also known as God, who is merciful, powerful, and with innumerable noble qualities. He is the omnipresent creator, preserver, and destroyer of everything.

The Upanishads talk of both these aspects, but their speciality lies in discussing the impersonal aspect of Brahman.

Knowledge of Reality

According to the sages, the world is important, and hence the knowledge to lead a meaningful life is important, but the key to all knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman. Whatever is in the universe, is Brahman, and hence by knowing it one knows everything, the way one knows the essence of all gold ornaments by knowing about gold. The most accepted method of acquiring the knowledge of Brahman was to go to an accomplished teacher and get groomed into it.

One meaning of the word ‘Upanishads’ is, to sit near the teacher and master the science of self-knowledge.

Alternatively, the word also means ‘the knowledge that results in destroying the identifications of a person with the world’.

The Upanishads were always learnt directly from a teacher, and if not used as a technique of freedom, these were as meaningless as a heap of words. Following this principle, nearly every Upanishad is in the form of a discourse by a teacher who was a renowned sage of the period. Even when a specific teacher is not mentioned, the presence of teacher is palpable in that Upanishad. Thus the authenticity of knowledge imparted by an Upanishad was maintained strictly at a personalised level. It is interesting to know that in spite of a large number of teachers mentioned in the Upanishads, their teachings are invariably the same.

To acquire that knowledge (not mere information) of Brahman, one had to perform intense austerities, known as tapasya. The word comes from the root tap which means ‘heat’, and also knowledge. When one goes through the blazing heat of tapasya in the form of selfless service, devotion, meditation, scriptural studies, or any other austerities, all the dross of his mind burns up. The mind then becomes calm and fit to receive instructions.

Atman

The Upanishads teach that atman is the true self of every individual, and that it is non-different from Brahman—the individual and the universal are same.

The general approach of the Upanishads is to lead a person from his gross ideas of self to the realisation of himself as the universal self. In one of the Upanishads, the teacher shows how his body, made by food, is his self. From there he leads the student to show vital forces working within his body as the self; then the mind as the self; intelligence as self; the ‘I’ness appearing as the thin veil separating him from the universal self as his self; and finally atman as the true self, which is eternally conscious, beyond good and bad, virtue and vice, birth and death, etc.

This spiritual knowledge is not speculative the way philosophy is, but it is intuitive. The technical word for it is non-indirect knowledge, which means that it is different from instinct, sensual, or inferential knowledge. Unlike every other kind of knowledge, spiritual knowledge is not acquired through the mind, but it is the consciousness itself that becomes conscious of its nature.

The example used in Vedanta is that of a clear crystal in front of which a coloured flower is placed. The flower apparently influences the transparent nature of the crystal. But when the flower is removed, the crystal becomes what it was all along—clear. The true self of everyone is exactly like this crystal—free of any tinge.

Aum

Aum is the symbolic representation of both personal and impersonal aspects of God. When one looks at the created world, one realises that every object has three aspects: physical manifestation, verbal representation, and the idea behind the both. Thus every object in this world, seen and unseen, has a name that requires sound produced by the vocal system which begins with the guttural 'a', through velar 'u', and ending at the lips with 'm'. By combining these three sounds one gets 'Aum', which is the symbolic matrix of all sound, and hence the basis for all names. Since name and objects are non-different, and God being the matrix of all objects, 'Aum' is respected as the verbal representation of God. The silence that follows after one pronounces Aum, denotes the impersonal aspect of God, implying that it cannot have any attribute. Hindus may squabble over many other things of their religion, but they all agree on the universality of Aum.

Three Schools

When a spiritual aspirant makes effort to gain knowledge, he first has to get rid of his desires for this life, and also afterlife. As one gains more and more spiritual knowledge through the calmness of his mind, one sees himself as atman, the conscious principle within him. This stage is known as dvaita (duality). If the aspirant continues with his spiritual practices, he comes to realise that the atman that is within him, is the essence of others too. This is known as visishta-advaita (conditional non-dualism). Finally, the aspirant may come to realise that atman (what he took for his individual consciousness) alone exists, and that, it is non-different from Brahman, the ever existent reality, which is by its very nature pure, infinite, eternal, etc. This last state of self-knowledge is known as advaita. Advaita is sometimes referred to as monism, but it is grossly incorrect. Monism implies presence of one, single entity, but Advaita is non-dual, implying that there are no two separate realities like consciousness and inertness, or mind and matter. Advaita implies that there is no way of knowing if it is one, or beyond the idea of one–two, since the mind itself ceases to exist in that state. The best way to describe the state of Advaita is 'What is, is'; one cannot say anything else about it in defining terms.

The idea of Advaita, although quite incomprehensible by the common minds, is the highest realisation by the Hindu mind, and is its greatest contribution to the world of religions. This state has been compared to mixing pure water with pure water, and as realising oneself as the calm, majestic self instead of the volatile. There are other metaphors too.

When a person realises his identity with the supreme Brahman, popularly known as aham Brahma asmi (I am Brahaman), one becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. Hinduism thus talks of achieving blessedness here and now, in this very life. One who realises the truth that he is atman, is known as jivanmukta, free while living. This is the highest spiritual state that has ever been described in any religion, and is unique to Hinduism. This knowledge is undoubtedly the crown jewel of all spiritual knowledge. And, like any precious knowledge acquired by the human race, it has to preserved at any cost.

Jivanmukti

If Hindu religion has a true distinctive feature, it is this knowledge of jivanmukti. Relevance in Present Times The Upanishads are the undiluted philosophy of Hinduism. Every other aspect of Hinduism follows the general principles of Vedanta—man is divine. In fact, every soul, every conscious form, and every particle is divine. The difference between any two life forms, or between inert matter and life form lies in the manifestation of that divinity. A conscious effort at it makes the manifestation more palpable. As a thought system, and also as a way of life, the Upanishads are clearly the power, glory, and the ultimate achievement of the Hindu race. No other contribution by India to the world can ever match the majesty, sublimity, and vitality embodied in these sacred texts.

Elucidation of Terms & Concepts in Vedanta

[Based on the Commentaries of Sri Sankaracharya and other authoritative texts]
By S. N. Sastri

Contents

Statements expounding particular terms and concepts in Vedanta are found scattered at different places in the Upanishads and the commentaries thereon. For example, if we take the concept of mukti (liberation), the answers to questions such as, what is mukti and what are the means to it, are found in various places. It was felt that if statements relating to each topic were collected and put together, that would be of considerable help in getting a total view about that topic. This is the task undertaken in this work. This is not by any means an exhaustive collection of all the statements relating to any particular topic. The attempt has been to gather together as much as is necessary to get a clear idea about each topic. Another purpose that this topic - wise grouping would serve is to make it possible to trace the exact place where a particular point has been elucidated. (The code used for transliteration of Sanskrit words is ITRANS 4.0 with some slight modifications).

1. Adhyaasa (Superimposition)

Brahmasuutra - - - (B.S.) - adhyaasabhaashya of S'rii S'ankara - smr.tiruupaH paratra puurvadr.shTa avabhaasah - - - adhyaasa (superimposition) is the illusory appearance, in another place, of an object seen earlier elsewhere. It is similar in nature to recollection. (On seeing a rope in dim light and not recognizing it as a rope, a person mistakes it for a snake which he has seen elsewhere. The snake is not absolutely unreal, because it is actually experienced, and produces the same effect, such as fear and so on, as a real snake would. At the same time, it is not real, because it is no longer seen when the rope has been recognized. It is therefore described as anirvachaniiya, or what cannot be classified as either real or unreal).

In the above definition, the words 'similar in nature to recollection' are intended to exclude recognition. 'Recollection' is of an object previously experienced, but which is not now present before the person recollecting. 'Recognition' is when the same object previously experienced is again present before the person.

B.G.13.26 S.B. - - - In this verse it is said that everything in this world is brought into existence by the association of the 'field' and the 'knower of the field', or, the self and the non - self. S'rii S'ankara points out in his commentary on this verse that the association of these two is only by superimposition, since there cannot be any real association between the self, which is absolutely real and the non - self which has only empirical reality. The non - self, (namely, the body, mind and organs,) is superimposed on the self and, consciousness, which is the nature of the self, is attributed to the body, mind and organs.

S'rii S'ankara further points out in his adhyaasa - bhaashya on the Brahma suutras that, when there is superimposition of one thing on another, the latter is not affected in the least by the good or bad qualities of the former. (e.g., nacre does not become more valuable because it is mistaken for silver, nor does a rope get the qualities of the snake which it is mistaken for). The implication of this statement is that the self does not undergo any of the changes, nor does it experience any of the joys and sorrows, of the body, mind and organs. It is, however, only because of this mutual superimposition of the self and the non - self that all action, both secular and religious, becomes possible. The self, by itself, is neither a doer of actions, nor an enjoyer of the results. It becomes a doer and an enjoyer only because of this superimposition, as a result of which, as S'rii S'ankara says, the real and the unreal, namely, the self and the non - self, are blended into one, as it were. All action, including the various rites laid down in the Vedas, thus come within the sphere of avidyaa or nescience, which is the cause of superimposition.

Superimposition is of two kinds. When a rope is mistaken for a snake, the snake alone is seen. The existence of the rope is not known at all. Here the snake is said to be superimposed on the rope. This is known as svaruupa - adhyaasa. The second kind of superimposition is when a crystal appears to be red in the proximity of a red flower. Here both the crystal and the flower are seen as existing, and the redness of the flower is attributed to the crystal also. This is known as samsarga - adhyaasa. Both these kinds of superimposition are present in the mutual superimposition of the self and the non - self.

Because of the superimposition of the non - self on the self, the existence of the self is not recognized at all, and the non - self, (that is, the body, mind and organs), is alone recognized as existing. This is svaruupa - adhyaasa. In the superimposition of the self on the non - self, only the consciousness of the self is attributed to the body, mind and organs. This is samsarga - adhyaasa. The result of this mutual superimposition is that everyone identifies himself with the body. This is the root cause of all suffering. Giving up this wrong identification with the body - mind complex and realizing that one is the self which is beyond all suffering and all the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, success and failure and so on, is vidyaa or knowledge. It is this knowledge that is contained in the Upanishads.

svaruupa - adhyaasa is also known as 'nirupaadhika adhyaasa', or superimposition without a limiting adjunct or upaadhi. The superimposition of an illusory snake on a rope is of this type. upaadhi has been defined by Bhaskararaya in his commentary on the name 'nirupaadhiH' (No.154) in the Lalitaasahasranaama as - - upa samiipe aadadhaati sviiyam dharmam -- that which gives its quality to an object near it. A red flower which makes a transparent crystal near it look red is an upaadhi. The superimposition of the

red colour on the crystal is a superimposition with upaadhi and it is known as 'sopaadhika adhyaasa',which is the same as samsarga adhyaasa.

In the superimposition of the snake on the rope, the substratum is considered to be the rope. But the rope itself is not real, and is a superimposition on Brahman or Consciousness. Therefore it is said in Vedaanta that the substratum is 'rajju - upahita chaitanyam',or, Consciousness apparently limited by the rope.

The illusory snake is said to be 'praatibhaasika'; the rope, like everything in this world, is 'vyaavahaarika',or empirical reality. Brahman alone is 'paaramaarthika', or absolute reality.

B.S. - Adhyaasa - bhaashya - - - adhyaaso naama atasmin tadbuddhiriti - - - - - -

adhyaasa, or superimposition, is the cognition, as a particular thing, of what is not that, like the cognition of what is not silver as silver. Other examples given here by S'rii S'ankara are - - - when one's wife or son is happy or unhappy, one considers oneself also as happy or unhappy; one attributes the qualities of the physical body, such as fatness, leanness and so on, to oneself, as one says - "I am fat, I am lean, etc"; one says - "I am blind, deaf, etc", attributing the qualities of the sense - organs to oneself. This superimposition is beginningless, it is of the nature of illusory cognition and is the cause of the notion of agency and enjoyership. The truth is that one is the aatmaa which is free from all these qualities. The wrong identification with the body, mind, organs, etc., can be removed only by the realization of one's real nature. The aim of Vedaanta is to enable one to attain this realization.

2. Advaita - Jnaana and Upaasanaa (Non - dual Realization and Meditations)

Similarity and difference between the two.

Ch.up. Introduction - S.B. -- yathaa advaitajnaanam manovr.ttimaatram - - - - - - - - - saamaanyam.

The similarity between non - dual realization and meditations is that both are mere modifications of the mind.

svaabhaavikasya aatmani adhyaaropitasya - - - - - - - - - - - - - iti vis'eshaH.

The difference between the two is this -- non - dual realization removes totally the cognition of all such differences as agent, instrument, action and results, which are superimposed naturally on the action - less Self, just as the

appearance of a snake is superimposed on a rope. This superimposition is removed by the knowledge of the substratum. But meditation consists in establishing a continuous flow of similar modifications of the mind with regard to some object as prescribed by the scriptures, and uninterrupted by any other thought.

3. Aatma - Indwelling Self

- - is self - luminous, unattached, etc.

Br.up.4.3.14.S.B. - - - svayamjyotiH aatmaa asti iti svapnanidars'anena pradars'itam.By the illustration of dream it has been proved that there is the self - luminous aatmaa and that it transcends the forms of death (i.e. the body and organs).

Br. Up. 4.3.17.S.B. - - - yathaa asau svapne asa.ngatvaat - - - - - - - - - - - buddhaantena.

Just as, being unattached in the dream state, the aatmaa is not affected, on its return to the waking state, by whatever appeared to have happened in the dream state, so also, it is not affected by anything done in the waking state. (In other words, the aatmaa is not at all affected by anything experienced either in the dream state or in the waking state).

Aatmaa in the three states

Br.up.4.3.19. S.B. - - - yasmaat jaagarite sasa.ngaH samr.tyuH - - - - - - - -

It has been shown that in the waking state the self appears through ignorance as connected with attachment, death (meaning here action) and the body and organs. In the dream state it appears to be connected with desire, but free from the forms of death (meaning the body, mind and organs -- See Br.up.4.3.7.S.B. - svatah kaaryakaraNaani eva asya ruupaaNi). In the state of deep sleep it is perfectly serene and unattached. This non - attachment is the special feature in this state. Considering all these passages together, it becomes clear that the self is by nature eternal, free, self - luminous and pure.

The jiivaatmaa is not a part (ams'a) of Brahman

Br.up.2.1.20.S.B."kshudraa visphuli.ngaaH"Br.up.2.1.20

"mamaivaams'aH" - B.G.15.7. - paramaatmaikatva - pratyaya - - - -

The passages such as 'tiny sparks', 'a part of Myself', are intended to convey the idea of identity. We are aware that sparks of fire are identical with fire. Thus a part may be considered as identical with the whole. Therefore words such as 'part of the Supreme Self', as applied to the individual self, are meant only to convey the idea of the identity of the two. (The supreme Self has no parts. It is one homogeneous entity).

The individual self appears as a separate entity because of the limiting adjuncts (upaadhi)

Br.up.2.4.12. S.B. - - - yathaa adbhyaH suuryachandraadipratibimbaH - - - - -

Just as reflections of the sun, moon, etc, arise in water, or a transparent crystal appears red because of the proximity of a red cloth, so also, because of the limiting adjuncts (upaadhi) in the form of the body and organs, Brahman appears as a separate individual entity. On the realization of one's true nature as being identical with Brahman, the notion that one is a separate individual entity comes to an end. As the reflections of the sun, moon, etc, and the redness of the crystal, disappear when their causes, namely the limiting adjuncts in the form of the water and the red cloth are removed, and the sun, moon and the transparent crystal alone remain as they are, so also, the endless, infinite and limpid Pure Consciousness, or Brahman, alone remains.

Consciousness pervades the whole body, mind, etc. -- an illustration - -
Br.up.4.3.7 S.B -- yathaa vaa marakataadiH maNiH - - - - - -
sarvaantaratamatvaat.

Just as an emerald or any other gem, dropped into a vessel of milk, imparts its lustre to the milk, so does this luminous self, being subtler than even the mind and the intellect, impart consciousness to the whole body, mind and organs. (When an emerald is dropped into milk, the latter gets a green hue. Similarly, the self, being pure consciousness, makes the insentient mind, body and organs sentient.)

Why people identify themselves with the body, mind, etc.

Br.up.4.3.7 S.B - - - buddhistaavat svachchhatvaat - - - - - - - yathaa vivekam jaayate.

The intellect, being transparent and next to the self, easily catches the reflection of the consciousness of the self. Therefore it is that even wise men identify themselves with the intellect first; next comes the mind which catches the reflection of the self through the intellect; then the organs through contact with the mind; and lastly, the body, through the organs. Thus the self

successively illumines with its own consciousness the entire aggregate of body and organs. This is the reason why all people identify themselves with the body, mind and organs, to a greater or lesser degree, according to the extent of their discriminating capacity.

4. Avidyaa (Nescience)

Br.up.4.3.20 S.B. - - - ata idam avidyaayaaH satatvam uktam - tataH phalam.

Therefore, the nature of nescience is that it represents what is infinite as finite, projects things other than the Self, which are non - existent and makes the Self appear as limited. From this sense of limitation arises the desire for things that appear to be different from oneself (due to ignorance of the truth that everything is but Brahman). This desire prompts one to action for its fulfillment. Action produces results, and this leads to further birth. Thus the cycle -- kaama, karma, janma -- desire, action, rebirth, goes on indefinitely, as long as ignorance continues.

tasmaat na aatmadharmaH avidyaa - - - - Ignorance is not a natural characteristic of the Self, because that which is natural to a thing can never be eliminated, like the heat and light of the sun.

B.S.Adhyaasabhaashya - - - avidyaavadvishayaaNi eva - - - - - - s'aastraaNi ca.

All the means of valid knowledge, such as perception, and even the scriptures, have validity only as long as a person is ignorant of the Self. (All these function only on the basis of the superimposition (adhyaasa) of the body, mind and organs on the Self. This superimposition comes to an end when avidyaa is eradicated. After that even the scriptural injunctions cease to be applicable).

This primal ignorance is described as beginningless. But this word is not used here in the same sense as that in which it is used in respect of Brahman. avidyaa is beginningless only in the sense that it has no cause. avidyaa is the cause of the entire universe according to Advaita.

It is not possible to classify this avidyaa either as real or as unreal. What is unreal (asat), like a sky - flower, or the horn of a rabbit, is never experienced. Since avidyaa is experienced, it is not unreal. According to Advaita, that alone is real, which never changes or ceases to exist. avidyaa, being removable by knowledge, is not real. It cannot be both real and unreal because the two are contradictory. So avidyaa is described as 'anirvachaniiya', different from both real and unreal. This does not mean that it is absolutely unreal. avidyaa has

empirical (vyaavahaarika) reality. The universe, which is an effect of avidyaa, also has the same level of reality. avidyaa, as well as the universe, are said to be indeterminable (anirvachaniiya) and illusory (mithyaa).

Locus and content of avidyaa

All are agreed that the content (or object) of nescience is Brahman. But there is difference of opinion with regard to its locus.

MaNDana Mis'ra says in Brahmasiddhi that the jiiva is the locus of nescience.

Vaachaspati Mis'ra holds the same view - see his commentary on Brahma suutra - 1.4.3.

Aanandagiri - - - - Brahman is the locus -- commentary on Brahma suutra - 1.4.3.

Sures'varaachaarya - - - Brahman is the locus - - - Naishkarmyasiddhi Ch.3.1.

Sarvajnaatmamuni - - - Brahman is the locus - - - Samkshepa s'aariirakam -- 1.319

Prakaas'aatman - - - - Brahman is the locus - - - - - - VivaraNa -

avidyaa is positive

avidyaa is not mere negation, as it is antagonistic to Knowledge. In Vedaantasaara of Sadaananda, ignorance is defined thus: - Ignorance is something positive, though intangible, which cannot be described as either being or non - being, which is made of three guNas (sattva, rajas and tamas), and is antagonistic to Knowledge. Ch.2.34
In B.G.5.15, the Lord says that Knowledge is covered by Ignorance. What covers can only be positive and cannot be negative. In Samkshepas'aariirakam 1.320 and in VivaraNa it is established that avidyaa is positive.

The same conclusion has been arrived at in Sures'vara's Vaartika on taitt. Up. Bhaashya - 2.179.

See also Samkshepas'aariirakam Chap.3.111.

It must, however, be noted that it is only from the empirical point of view that it is said that avidyaa, while being other than the real as well as the unreal, is positive and not mere absence of knowledge. From the absolute point of view, avidyaa does not exist at all. See also under the heading 'Maayaa', where verses from Panchadas'i have been quoted.

avidyaa has two powers

avidyaa or Nescience covers Brahman with its veiling power (aavaraNa s'akti) and projects the universe with its power known as vikshepa s'akti -- see Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 113 and 115.

In Vedaantasaara it is said: - Just as a small patch of cloud, by obstructing the vision of the observer, conceals, as it were, the solar disc extending over a very large area, similarly, ignorance, though limited by nature, yet obstructing the intellect of the observer, conceals, as it were, the Self, which is unlimited and not subject to transmigration. Such a power is the power of concealment. (Para 52).

The Self, covered by this concealing power of ignorance, becomes subject to transmigration characterized by the notion of being a doer and an enjoyer. Just as ignorance regarding a rope, by its inherent power, gives rise to the illusion of a snake, etc., so also, ignorance, by its own power, creates in the Self covered by it, such phenomena as aakaas'a, etc. Such a power is called the power of projection. (Paras 53 and 54).

avidyaa and maayaa -- whether the same or different

S'rii S'ankara treats avidyaa and maayaa as identical - See B.S.Bhaashya - 1.4.3.Sures'vara also does the same.

Samkshepas'aariirakam - 3.108 - 109 expresses the same view.

In Panchadas'i, VidyaaraNya says that prakr.ti constituted of pure sattva is maayaa and when constituted of sattva mixed with rajas and tamas is avidyaa. Brahman reflected in maayaa is iis'vara, who is omniscient and is the controller of maayaa. Brahman reflected in avidyaa is jiiva.

In Patanjali's Yoga suutras avidyaa is described as one of the five 'kles'a - s', or causes of man's suffering. (Suutra 2.3); the other four are egoism (asmitaa), attachment (raaga), aversion (dvesha) and the desire to cling on to life (abhinives'a). avidyaa is said to be the cause of the other four (2.4). avidyaa is defined as looking upon what is non - eternal as eternal, what is impure as pure, what is painful as pleasant and the non - Self as the Self (2.5).

avidyaavr.tti

In deep sleep there is avidyaa as well as avidyaavr.tti. avidyaa, which is the adjunct (upaadhi) of the Self in deep sleep, is the causal condition of the mind. While the mind is dormant in deep sleep (sushupti), it is through

avidyaavr.tti that ignorance and happiness are experienced. On waking up, the mind again comes out of its causal condition and there arises the memory of what was experienced in sleep.

svaruupa - jnaana, which is the very nature of Brahman, is not opposed to primal ignorance. It is this svaruupa - jnaana which reveals the ignorance. The primal ignorance which is the cause of bondage is destroyed by the mental mode (akhaNDaakaaravr.tti) generated by the mahaavaakyas. This final vr.tti - jnaana also disappears immediately thereafter, in the same way as the medicine itself disappears after removing the disease.

5. Avidyaanivr.Tti

There are three views on what is meant by 'avidyaanivr.tti' or the cessation of ignorance.

1. It is identical with Brahman - Aatman.

2. It is different from Brahman - Aatman and yet it is not anirvachaniiya, but is of a fifth kind.

3. It is identical with the direct experience of Brahman - Aatman.

See Samkshepas'aariirakam - 4.13 onwards.

Madhusuudana Sarasvati rejects the second view stated above -- see Vedaantakalpalatika -

The first view derives support from S'rii S'ankara's Haristuti -- tam samsaaradhvaantavinaas'am harim iDe.

MaNDana favours the third view above in Brahmasiddhi.

Madhusuudana Sarasvati supports the first and third views in his Advaitasiddhi -- tasmaat ajnaanahaanih aatmasvaruupam tadaakaaraa vr.tti vaa iti siddham - - - -

6. Ahamkaara

VivekachuuDaamaNi - verse No.106 - - - ahamkaaraH sa vijneyaH -- In his commentary on this verse, H.H. Svaami Chandrasekhara Bhaarati says - ahamkaara, the ego - sense, is the antaHkaraNam (the internal organ or mind) with the reflection of the consciousness of the Self in it. It then identifies itself with the body and senses. This antaHkaraNam considers itself as doer and enjoyer. It acquires the states of waking, dream and deep sleep by conjunction with rajoguNa, sattvaguNa and tamoguNa respectively.

Sri sures'vara points out in his Naishkarmyasiddhi ,Ch.2, verses 46 to 51 that (1)the internal organ is the connecting link between the Self and the non - Self (verse 46), (2) it makes the Self which is one appear as many (v.47), (3) it is because of it that the Self, though free from action and attributes, appears to have all of them (v.49), and (4) it makes the non - relational Self relational, as it were (v.51). The internal organ assumes the form of the external object which is presented to it and when this modification of the internal organ (antaHkaraNa - vr.tti) is illumined by the Self which is reflected therein, the internal organ assumes the role of the knower or the seer, though by itself it cannot be the knower since it is insentient. In the absence of the internal organ, as in sushupti, the Self has no relation with anything and does not experience anything, subjective or objective.

B.G.3.27 - S.B - Ahamkara is looking upon the aggregate of body and organs as 'I'.

7. Brahman

taitt. Up. 2.1 S.B. - - - br.hattamatvaat Brahma - - - Being the greatest, it is known as Brahman.

The sentence - Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinite - is meant to be the definition of Brahman.

A thing is said to be satya - true - when it does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own; and a thing that deviates from the form in which it has been once ascertained is said to be unreal. (This is the literal translation of the statement in the Bhaashya. The gist of this is that, the meaning of the word 'true' in Vedaanta is - - - that which never undergoes any change at any time. Brahman alone is true in this sense). Every modification is therefore unreal. The s'ruti says - all modification is mere name, created by words alone; what is called clay is alone real. (Ch.up. 6.1.4). Various forms such as pot, etc, made out of clay are all unreal. Their reality is only as clay. Thus, by the word 'truth' the s'ruti distinguishes Brahman from all changing forms.

By the word 'knowledge' the s'ruti makes it clear that Brahman is not insentient like clay.

By the three words - truth, knowledge and infinite - it is made clear that Brahman is different from everything in the universe which is always subject to change, is insentient and limited by time, space and other objects.

Here knowledge means 'consciousness' and not a particular knowledge, which has a beginning and an end and is therefore finite. This consciousness is not distinct from Brahman, but is its essential nature, like the light of the

sun or the heat of fire. This consciousness is eternal and is present even during deep sleep. A specific act of knowing takes place only when the mind functions in association with the relevant sense - organ, but this must be distinguished from consciousness, which is ever present. It is this consciousness which is known as Brahman. Brahman, which is Pure Consciousness, becomes a 'knower' only when the intellect is superimposed on it.

Upades'a saahas'rii - (Metrical portion) - Ch.18. Verse 65 -- The Self is looked upon as a knower only because of the superimposition on it of the knowership of the intellect. Similarly, the intellect is considered as a knower only because of the superimposition of consciousness on it.

Since the words truth, knowledge, and infinite are only intended to convey that Brahman is different from all that is subject to change, all that is insentient and all that is limited, and since such an object is not known to anyone, it may be argued that Brahman is non - existent, like the objects mentioned in the following statement: -

"Having bathed in the waters of the mirage and adorned his head with sky - flowers (i.e. flowers which grow in the sky), here goes the son of a barren woman, carrying a bow made out of the horn of a hare". The answer to this is that, since the words are intended as a definition of Brahman and a definition is given only for something that exists and not for something non - existent, the argument is not tenable. Here Aanandagiri says -- The word truth connotes unfailing existence, the word consciousness connotes self - luminous knowledge of all objects and the word infinite connotes all - pervasiveness. Thus each of these words conveys a positive idea, while excluding the opposite and does not mean a mere negation.

The words satyam, jnaanam, etc, apply to Brahman only in their secondary sense (lakshyaartha) and not in their primary sense (vaachyaartha) -- see Samkshepas'aariirakam Ch.1. verses 178 to 184.

Brahman is in reality attributeless

In Brahma suutra 3.2.11 to 3.2.21, it is established that, though the scriptures describe Brahman as both qualified (Ch.up.3.14.2) and as unqualified (Br.up.3.8.8), Brahman is really attributeless. The description of Brahman as qualified is only for the purpose of Upaasanaa (meditation).

Brahma suutra 3.2.22. S.B. - - - In Br.up.2.3.1 it is said that Brahman has two forms -- gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and unlimited, defined and undefined. Then it is said in Br.up.2.3.6 - "Now therefore the description (of Brahman) -- neti, neti -- not so, not so". These two negatives deny the two aspects, gross and subtle etc. By this the reality of all creation is denied.

Two kinds of definition of Brahman

There are two kinds of definition of Brahman -- (1) svaruupalakshaNam -- definition with reference to the essential nature, e.g. satyam jnaanam anantam brahma -- taitt,up. 2.1. (2) taTasthalakshaNam -- This is based on an accidental feature, which helps to distinguish the object defined. An example is the identification of a house by pointing out a crow sitting on it. While the crow may fly away, it nevertheless helps a person to know which is the house meant. In the case of Brahman, such a definition is -- yato vaa imaani bhuutaani jaayante - - - - - - That from which all these beings are born, that by which they live and that towards which they move and into which they merge. (taitt.up,3.1.1).

How the Self pervades all bodies -- examples

Br.up.1.4.7 S.B. - - - yathaa cha kshuraH kshuradhaane - - - -

As a razor lies in one part of its case, as fire lies in wood, pervading it, so does the Self dwell in the body, pervading it in a general and particular way. There it is perceived as doing the functions of living, seeing, etc.

The meaning of "neti, neti' - - -

Br,up. 2.3.6.S.B. - - - aades'o nirdes'o BrahmaNaH. KaH punarasau - - - - - - - - neti neti iti nirdes'aH.

How is it sought to describe Brahman , the Truth of truth? By the elimination of all differences due to limiting adjuncts, the words "Neti, neti" refer to something that has no distinguishing mark, such as name, form, action, heterogeneity, species or qualities. Words refer to things through one or more of these marks. But Brahman has none of these distinguishing marks. Therefore it cannot be described as, "It is such and such ", as we can describe a cow by saying, "There moves a white cow with horns". Brahman can be described only by the superimposition of name, form and action. When, however, we wish to describe its true nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, the only way is to describe it as - not this, not this.

Brahman transcends all qualities

Br.up.3.5.1.S.B. - - - avivekibhiH talamalavadiva gaganam - - - - -

As the sky, fancied by the ignorant as being concave and blue, is really without these qualities, being untouched by them, so also Brahman - Aatman, although thought of by the ignorant as being subject to hunger, thirst, etc, really transcends all these qualities. The S'ruti says -- "It is not affected by human misery, being beyond it" - KaTha up. 2.2.11

Brahman, the individual self and iis'vara

Br.up.3.8.12.S.B. - - - kastarhi bhedaH eteshaam?

What is the difference among them? It is only due to the difference in the limiting adjuncts. Intrinsically, there is neither difference nor identity among them, for all the three are in essence Pure Consciousness, homogeneous like a lump of salt. When the unconditioned Self has, as the limiting adjuncts, the body and organs which are characterized by ignorance, desire and action, it is called the transmigrating individual self. When the limiting adjunct is the power of eternal and unlimited knowledge, which is Maayaa, the same Self is known as iis'vara, who is the antaryaamii or Inner Controller. The same Self, free from all limiting adjuncts, is Brahman. When the limiting adjuncts are the bodies of hiraNyagarbha, the gods, men, animals and others, the same Self assumes those particular names and forms.

Br.up.4.4.5.S.B. - - - sa vaa ayam ya evam samsarati - - - - - - as'anaayaadyatiitaH.

The transmigrating self is indeed Brahman, which is beyond hunger, etc.

Br.up.4.4.25.S.B. - - - ya evam yathoktam aatmaanam - - - - - - - - -

He who knows the self-described above as the Brahman which is beyond fear becomes Brahman. This is the purport of the whole Upanishad put in a nutshell. It is to bring out this purport that the ideas of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe, as well as the ideas of action, its factors and results were superimposed on the Self. Then, by the negation of the superimposed attributes the true nature of Brahman as free from all attributes has been brought out. This is the method of adhyaaropa and apavaada, superimposition and negation, which is adopted by Vedaanta.

Br. Up.5.1.1.S.B. - - - yadyapi Brahmaatmaadis'abdaaH - - - - - - -

Although the words 'Brahman', 'aatman' etc, are names of Brahman, we see from the s'ruti that Om is its most intimate appellation. Therefore, Om is the best means for the realization of Brahman. Om is both a symbol for Brahman and its name.

Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe.

Panchadas'i - 1.44 - - - Brahman becomes the material cause of the universe when it is associated with that aspect of maayaa in which there is predominance of tamas. It becomes the efficient cause when associated with that aspect of maayaa in which there is predominance of sattva.

Brahman is free from all the three types of differences

Panchadas'i - 2.20 and 21. - - - Differences are of three kinds. The difference of a tree from its leaves, flowers, fruits, etc, is the difference within an object. This is known as svagata bheda. The difference of one tree from another tree is the difference between objects of the same species. This is known as sajaatiiya bheda. The difference of a tree from a rock is the difference between objects of different species. This is known as vijaatiiya bheda. None of these differences exists with regard to Brahman, because there is nothing else of the same species or of a different species and there is no internal difference because Brahman is homogeneous. This is what is affirmed in the Chhaandogya upanishad (6.2.1) by the words "ekam eva advitiiyam" - one, only, without a second. The word "one' negates sajaatiiya bheda, the word 'only' negates svagata bheda and the words 'without a second' negate vijaatiiya bheda.

Brahman is free from all limitations

Panchadas'i - 3.35, 36, 37 - - - Being all - pervasive, Brahman is not limited by space. Being eternal, it is not limited by time. Since all objects in the universe are merely superimposed on Brahman, Brahman is not limited by any object, just as a rope is not limited by the illusory snake superimposed on it.

8. Cause and Effect

Taitt. Up. 2.1.S.B. - - - na hi kaaraNavyatirekeNa kaaryam naama vastutaH asti - - - -

There is no such thing as effect in reality apart from the cause. The effect has no real existence apart from the cause.

Ch.up.6.1.4 - - - All modifications exist in name only, being created only by words.

Anubhuutiprakaas'a of VidyaaraNya -- 1.20 -- Just as a pot made out of clay is really nothing but clay, so also this universe which has originated from the Supreme Self (Brahman) has no reality apart from the Supreme Self.

9. Creation

The real object of the description of creation

The Upanishads describe the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. This should not, however, be taken to mean that creation, etc, are

real. According to Advaita, creation is not real, but is only a superimposition on Brahman, which alone is real in the absolute sense. The universe, which is a transformation of maayaa, is anirvachaniiya. It cannot be described either as real or as unreal. It has empirical reality only. The description of creation, etc, in the Upanishads is only to bring out the truth that Brahman, the cause, alone is real. The effect, universe, has no independent existence apart from the cause, Brahman. The following passages from S'rii S'ankara's Bhaashya bring out the real purpose of the statements about creation, etc, in the Upanishads.

Br.up.2.1.20.S.B. - - - tasmaat upakramopasamhaaraabhyaam - vaakyaani iti.

From the introduction and conclusion it is clear that the passages speaking about the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe are intended only to strengthen the idea that the individual self is the same as the Supreme Self.

Br.up.2.1.20.S.B. - - - tasmaat ekaruupaikatvapratyayadaarDhyaaya - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - paramaatmanaH

Therefore, the mention in all the Vedaanta texts of the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe is only to strengthen our idea of Brahman being a homogeneous entity, and not to tell us that the origin, etc, is real. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that a part of the indivisible, transcendental Supreme Self becomes the relative, individual self, because the Supreme Self is intrinsically without parts.

The theory of vivarta

Advaita Vedaanta explains the creation of the world by the theory of vivarta. This theory is different from the theory of aarambha vaada of Nyaaya - Vais'eshika and the pariNaama vaada of Saankhya. According to aarambha vaada the effect was not pre - existent in the cause and is something new which has come into existence. This theory is also called asatkaarya vada, because according to this the kaarya, effect, did not previously exist. According to the pariNaama vaada, the effect was existent in the cause and is only a transformation of the cause. It is therefore also known as satkaarya vaada, because the kaarya, effect, was existent in the cause. According to Advaita, the effect is not an actual transformation of the cause. Brahman is immutable and there can be no transformation of it. It only serves as the substratum (adhishThaana) for the appearance of the universe, just as the rope serves as the substratum for the appearance of the illusory snake.

This nature of the universe as a mere appearance on Brahman is brought out beautifully by Sures'vara in the following verses: -

Naishkarmyasiddhi.1.1 - - - I offer my salutation to Hari, the destroyer of darkness and the witness of the intellect, from whom the universe consisting of ether, air, fire, water and earth has arisen like a snake from a garland.

Taitt. Up. Bhaashya Vaartika.2.378 - - - He, the Supreme Lord, the controller of maayaa, having created the universe with His maayaa, entered that very universe in the same way as a garland can be said to enter the illusory snake projected on it. (By this, the statements in the taitt.up.2.6.1 and the Br.up.1.4.7 that the Lord, having created the universe, entered into it, are also explained).

This appearance of the universe is due to avidyaa, or nescience, which conceals Brahman by its veiling power (aavaraNa s'akti) and projects the universe by its power of projection (vikshepa s'akti). The universe is therefore said to be only a vivarta, or apparent transformation, of Brahman. Like the illusory snake with rope as the substratum, the universe is illusory, or mithyaa, with Brahman as the substratum. But there is a vital difference between the illusoriness of the rope - snake and that of the universe. While the snake is purely illusory, or praatibhaasika, the universe has empirical, or vyaavahaarika, reality. That means that the universe is real for all those who are still in ignorance of Brahman. It loses its reality only when Brahman is realized as the only reality and as identical with one's own self, or, in other words, when identification with the body - mind complex completely disappears. Bondage is nothing but identification with the body - mind complex. This identification being due only to the ignorance of the truth that one is really the aatmaa, which is the same as Brahman, it can be removed only by the knowledge of one's real nature as Brahman.

Madhusuudana Sarasvati therefore says in Siddhaantabindu that the following statements in the s'ruti, which say that bondage ceases when Brahman is known, establish by implication the illusory nature of the universe: -

MuND.up.2.2.8 - - - When that Self, which is the cause as well as the effect, is realized, the knot of the heart is cut asunder, all doubts are resolved and the effects of past karma are destroyed.

S'vetaas'vatara up.3.8 - - - By knowing that Self one goes beyond death.

Ch.up.7.1.3 - - - The knower of the Self goes beyond sorrow.

It is further pointed out in Siddhaantabindu that the following statements bring out explicitly the illusoriness of the universe: -

Br.up.3.4.2 - - - Everything other than the Self is subject to destruction.

Br.up.4.4.19 - - - There is no difference whatsoever in it (Brahman).

Br.up.2.3.6 - - - Now therefore the description (of Brahman) -- Not this, not this.

Bearing in mind the real import of the statements about creation, we may now go into the description of creation as found in the Upanishads and other Vedaanta texts.

10. Creation of the Subtle Elements

Taitt.up.2.1.1.S.B. - - - tasmaad etasmaad brahmaNaH aatma - svaruupaat - - - - -

From that Brahman, which is identical with the indwelling self, aakaas'a, space, was created. aakaas'a means, that which is possessed of the attribute of sound and provides space for all things that have form. From that aakaas'a was born vaayu, air, which has two attributes, namely, its own quality, touch, and sound, the quality of its cause, aakaas'a. From air was produced agniH, fire, with three qualities, namely, its own quality, colour and the qualities of air and space. From fire was born aapah, water, with its own quality, taste, and the qualities of fire, air and space. From water was produced the element, pr.thivii, with its own quality, smell and the qualities of water, fire, air and space. These are the five subtle elements.

In Ch.up.6.2.3, the creation of only three elements is mentioned, namely fire, water and earth. S'rii S'ankara says here that it is logical to assume that, after creating space and air, Brahman created fire. The intended meaning is that all these have originated from sat, Existence, or Brahman and are therefore sat alone. The statement that all these elements arose from Brahman is clarified in Panchadas'i 1.18 by saying that these elements arose at the command of iis'vara from that aspect of prakr.ti in which tamas predominates.

11. Creation of the Organs of Sense

Vedaanta paribhaashaa.Ch.7 - - - These subtle elements have arisen from prakr.ti, which is made up of the three guNas, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas, (which can be described as serenity, activity and inertia respectively). These elements are also therefore constituted of the same three guNas. From the sattva part of space, air, fire, water and earth are produced, respectively, the indriyas, known as ear, sense of touch, eye, the sense of taste and the sense of smell. It must be noted that these are not the organs, such as eye, etc, in the physical body. These latter are called golaka. The

indriyas are the subtle counterparts of the external organs and form part of the subtle body, which will be described later. The presiding deities of these five indriyas are, respectively, the devataas of the Quarters, Air, the sun, VaruNa (the god of the waters) and the two As'vini devas. (See also Panchadas'i.1.19).

It may be noted that each sense - organ is produced from the particular subtle element whose distinctive quality it has the power to reveal. For example, the organ of hearing reveals sound, which is the particular quality of aakaas'a, from the sattva part of which it is produced. The organ of smell is produced from the sattva part of pr.thivii, whose distinctive quality, smell, it reveals. S'rii S'ankara says in his commentary on Br.up.2.4.11 -- The s'ruti considers the organs to be of the same category as the objects, not of a different category. The organs are but modes of the objects they perceive.

12. Creation of the Organs of Action

Vedaanta paribhaashaa.Ch.7 and Panchadas'i.1.21 - - - From the rajas part of these five elements are produced, respectively, the organs of action called the tongue, the hand, the feet, the anus and the organ of generation. These, again, are not the physical organs bearing those names, but their subtle counterparts in the subtle body. The presiding deities of these organs are, in order, the devataa of Fire, Indra, VishNu, Yama and Prajaapati.

13. Creation of the Antahkaranam or Internal Organ

Vedaanta paribhaashaa Ch.7 and Panchadas'i.1.20.From the sattva part of all the five subtle elements together is produced the antaHkaraNam which is known by four different names according to the function. The four names are - manas, buddhi, chittam and ahamkaara. (Sometimes only two names, manas and buddhi, are mentioned, as in Panchadas'i.1.20, the other two being included in them). These four functions are explained in VivekachuuDaamaNi, verses 95 and 96. The function of cogitation is known as the manas or mind. When a determination is made, it is known as buddhi or intellect. The function of storing experiences in memory is called chittam . Egoism is ahamkaara. The word 'mind' is also used to denote the antaHkaraNam as a whole when these distinctions are not intended. We shall use the word 'mind' in this sense hereafter.

There is difference of opinion among Advaitins on the question whether the mind is an indriya, organ, or not. Vaachaspati Mis'ra, the author of Bhaamatii, considers the mind as an indriya. Prakaas'aatma muni, the author of VivaraNa, takes the view that the mind is not an indriya. The author of Vedaanta paribhaashaa also takes the same view. This point assumes importance when the question as to how realization takes place through the

mahaavaakyas is considered. This will be dealt with later at the appropriate place.

In Panchadas'i.2.18, the number of indriyas is mentioned as eleven, indicating that the mind is also considered as an indriya there.

The mind is finite, being of medium magnitude (madhyama parimaaNa). It can therefore be connected with one or more of the organs at the same time. It has the capacity to expand and contract and take the form of any object.

The mind, being made of extremely subtle and transparent substance, receives the reflection of the consciousness of the Self. Because of this, it appears to be sentient, though it is really inert. All knowledge arises only through an appropriate modification of the mind, corresponding to the object of knowledge. (See further elaboration under 'Process of visual perception'). The mental states of pain, pleasure, fear, hope, and the like are illuminated directly by the witness - self without any intermediary. So they are said to be manifested by the witness - self alone (kevala - saakshi - bhaasya). The mental states become known as soon as they arise.

Panchadas'i.2.12 - - - Mind, the ruler of the ten indriyas, is not independent, but depends on the organs of sense and action for its function in relation to external objects.

At the same time, no sense organ can function without the co - operation of the mind. In his Bhaashya on Br.up.1.5.3, S'rii S'ankara says - There is a mind apart from the external organs such as the ear. For, it is a well - known fact, that even when an object is in front, a person does not see it, if his mind is elsewhere. Similarly, a person does not hear what is said, if he is absent - minded. Therefore it is clear that in the absence of the mind, the sense organs do not perceive their respective objects. Hence it is through the mind that everyone sees, hears, etc.

Br.up.1.5.3 describes the mind thus: - Desire, resolve, doubt, faith, absence of faith, steadiness, unsteadiness, shame, intelligence and fear -- all these are but the mind.

Another fact proving the existence of the mind is also stated here by S'rii S'ankara -- 'Because if one is touched by anybody even from behind, one is able to know distinctly whether it is a touch of a hand or of a knee. If there is no mind to distinguish them, how can the skin alone do this? That which helps us to distinguish between different perceptions is the mind'.

Panchadas'i.2.13. It is the mind which examines the merits and defects of the objects perceived through the senses. The conclusion which the mind comes to will depend on the proportion of the three guNas in it at the time.

Panchadas'i.2.15. When sattva guNa is predominant in the mind, merit (puNya) is acquired; when rajas is predominant, demerit (paapa) is acquired.

Panchadas'i.2.16. When tamas is predominant in the mind, neither merit nor demerit is produced, but life is merely wasted.

Mind is the cause of bondage, as well as of liberation

Amr.tabindu upanishad, mantra 2, says that the mind is, verily, the cause of bondage as well as of liberation; engrossed in objects of sense, it leads to bondage; free from attachment to objects, the same mind leads to liberation.

In samaadhi the manas (mind) becomes 'no - manas'; it attains to the state called amaniibhaava -- GauDapaada's MaaNDuukya Kaarikaa, AdvaitaprakaraNa, verse 31. In verse 32, the term amaniibhava is explained -- "When by the conviction of Aatman's reality, manas ceases to imagine, then it becomes 'no - manas', unperceiving for want of objects of perception".

14. Creation of Praana (Vital Air)

From a combination of the rajas aspect of the five subtle elements, is produced praaNa, or vital air. This has five divisions, according to the function performed. These are described in the Bhaashya on Pras'na Upanishad.3.5, thus: - - - He (praaNa) places apaana, a division of himself, in the two lower apertures, as engaged in the work of ejecting the excreta . praaNa himself, who occupies the position of the sovereign, resides in the eyes and the ears and issues out through the mouth and nostrils. In the navel is samaana, which is so called because it assimilates all that is eaten or drunk, distributes them equally in all parts of the body and effects digestion. udaana, another division of praaNa, moves throughout the body and functions upwards. It leads the soul out of the body at the time of death and takes it to other worlds according to one's puNya and paapa. vyaana regulates praaNa and apaana and is the cause of actions requiring strength. (See also Br.up.1.5.3.S.B).

Br.up.3.9.26.S.B. - - - The force called praaNa would go out (through the mouth and nostrils) if it were not held back by apaana. The force called apaana would also depart (through the lower orifice) if it were not held back by vyaana. All these three forces would go out in all directions, if they were not fixed to udaana. All these four forces rest on samaana.

Taitt.up.2.2.S.B. - - - praaNa is that aspect which goes out through the mouth and nostrils.

B.G.4.29.S.B - - - Exhalation through the mouth and the nostrils is the movement of praaNa; as opposed to that, inhalation is the movement of apaana.

Vedaantasaara -- Paras 84 and 85 - - - According to Saankhya, there are five more vital forces known as naaga, kuurma, kr.kala, devadatta and dhananjaya. Their functions are, respectively, causing vomiting, winking, creating hunger, producing yawning and nourishing the body.

15. Quintuplication of the Subtle Elements

Panchadas'i.1.26,27 - - - The omnipotent Lord combined the five subtle elements by the process known as 'panchiikaraNam' (Quintuplication)and produced gross elements to provide the jiivas (individual souls) with physical bodies and objects of enjoyment. The process of combination of the subtle elements is -- Each subtle element is divided into two equal parts. The second half of each such element is divided into four equal parts (i.e. to get one - eighth of each element). Then the first half of each element is combined with one - eighth of each of the other four elements to make a gross element. The result is that in a gross element of earth one half is earth itself and the other half is made up of the elements of water, fire, air and space in equal shares. Similarly with the other four gross elements.

In the Chhaandogya upanishad, the creation of only fire, water and earth is spoken of (Chapter 6). It is further said that these three are combined (6.3.3). In Vedaantasaara, para 101 it is said that the authoritativeness of the compounding of the five elements is indirectly supported by the description of the combination of three elements in Ch.up.6.3.3. This combination of the three elements is also referred to in Brahma suutra 2.4.22.

16. Three Bodies of the Jiiva (Individual Soul)

prakr.ti, which is made up of the three guNas, is of two kinds. When the element of sattva is pure, that is to say, not mixed with the other two, it is called Maayaa. When sattva is mixed with rajas and tamas, prakr.ti is known as avidyaa. Brahman reflected in maayaa is iis'vara, who is omniscient and the controller of maayaa. Brahman reflected in avidyaa is jiiva, or the individual soul. jiivas are many.

(Panchadas'i.1.16,17).

The jiiva has three bodies, known as the causal body or kaaraNa s'ariira, the subtle body or suukshma s'ariira or li.nga s'ariira and the gross body or sthuula s'ariira.

Causal body

The avidyaa or nescience, is what is known as the causal body or kaaraNa s'ariira. It is the cause of the transmigratory existence of the jiiva and so it is called KaaraNa or cause. Though it has no form, it is called s'ariira or body, because it is liable to destruction on the dawn of Self - knowledge. The word s'ariira means,'that which is perishable' (s'iiryate iti s'ariiram). In deep sleep the mind and the senses are dormant and nescience alone is present. The jiiva identifies himself with nescience in deep sleep. The jiiva is then known as praajna.

Subtle body

Panchadas'i.1.23 and 1.24. - - - The five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the five praaNas, mind and intellect, these seventeen together form the subtle body. In some of the Upanishads ahamkaara and chittam are also counted separately, and the number of constituents is stated as nineteen, e,g. MaaNDuukya Upanishad. When the jiiva identifies himself with this body, as in the dream state, he is known as taijasa.

Gross body

Vedaantasaara. Paras 104 to 109. The gross or physical body is produced out of the five gross elements. Gross bodies are of four kinds -- jaraayuja,or those born of the womb, aNDaja, or those born out of eggs, svedaja, or those born from moisture and udbhijja, or those which spring from the soil. The first kind are men and animals. The second kind consists of birds and reptiles. To the third kind belong creatures like lice. Plants and trees belong to the last kind.

When the jiiva identifies himself with the gross body, as in the waking state, he is known as vis'va.

17. Five Sheaths

The three bodies mentioned above are grouped in another manner to form five sheaths or Kos'as. These are -- annamayakos'a, praaNamayakos'a, manomayakos'a, vijnaanamayakos'a and aanandamayakos'a. These are described in taitt.up. Ch.2.

annamayakos'a or the Food - sheath - - - This is the same as the gross body. See Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 156 to 158 for a description.

praaNamayakos'a - - - The five praaNas, together with the five organs of action, form this. See Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 167 and 168.

manomayakos'a - - - This is made up of the mind and the five sense - organs. See Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 169 onwards.

vijnaanamayakos'a - - - The buddhi (intellect) and the five sense - organs constitute this. See Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 186 onwards.

The praaNamayakos'a, manomayakos'a and vijnaanamayakos'a together make up the subtle body.

aanandamayakos'a - - - See Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verses 209 and 210. This sheath is the modification of avidyaa and appears as a reflection of the aatmaa which is Pure Bliss. It is fully manifested in dreamless sleep. In the waking and dream states it is experienced a little due to the presence of desired objects. In Brahma suutra 1.1.12 to 19 the contention of some schools that this sheath is Brahman is refuted with detailed reasons and it is established that this sheath is also non - self. This sheath is the same as the kaaraNa s'ariira.

18. Three States

The jiiva has three states -- waking, dream and deep sleep.

Waking state

Viveka chuuDaamaNi - Verse 91. In the waking state the jiiva identifies himself with the gross body and experiences gross objects through the external organs. The jiiva is known as vis'va in this state. Brahman associated with the totality of gross bodies (the macrocosm) is called vais'vaanara or viraaT. MaaNDuukya upanishad, mantra 3 says about this state -- The first quarter (of the Self) is vais'vaanara whose sphere is the waking state, whose consciousness relates to things external, who is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths, and who experiences gross (external) objects.

Dream state

Viveka chuuDaamaNi (V.C.) Verse 100 -- This is the special state of the subtle body. In this state the buddhi shines by taking the role of the agent, with the vaasanaas (impressions) derived from the waking state. In this state

the sense - organs are dormant. Under the influence of ignorance, desire and past action, the mind, possessed of the impressions of the waking state, creates objects. Br. Up.4.3.10.S.B. says - There are no chariots, nor animals to be yoked to them, nor roads there, but the jiiva creates them in this state. In this state the jiiva is known as taijasa. The corresponding macrocosm is called hiraNyagarbha. MaaNDuukya up. mantra 4 says - - taijasa is the second quarter, whose sphere is the dream state, whose consciousness is internal, who is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths, and who experiences subtle objects.

Deep sleep state

V.C. Verse 122 - - - sushupti, deep, dreamless sleep, is the special state of the causal body. This state is characterized by the dissolution of the activities of all the sense - organs and the mind. The mind remains only in seed - form. This state is described in MaaND. up,mantra 5, as the state in which there are no desires and no dreams. In Vedaanta the waking state is also considered to be similar to dream, because the Reality is not known and what is unreal is projected in both these states. In deep sleep, though the Reality, Brahman, is not known, there is no appearance of what is unreal, as in the waking and dream states. In this state the jiiva is called praajna. The corresponding macrocosm is iis'vara.

In MaaND. up. Mantra 2, it is said that the Self has four quarters. The waking, dream and deep sleep are the first three quarters. The fourth, turiiya, is aatmaa unconditioned by the three states. MaaNDuukya kaarikaa, 1.14 says -- The first two are endued with dream and sleep, but the third is endued with dreamless sleep. There is neither dream nor sleep in turiiya. Here sleep means ignorance of the Reality and dream means projection of the unreal. The fourth, turiiya, is the state of samaadhi.

The self desires to go into the state of deep sleep

Br. Up. 4.3.19.S.B. - - - tadyathaa asmin aakaas'e - - - svamaatmaanam pravis'ati.

As a hawk or a falcon, flying in the sky, becomes exhausted, and stretching its wings, goes towards its nest, where it can have perfect rest, so does this infinite being run for this state, where, falling asleep it craves for nothing and sees no dream. The waking state is also considered by the s'ruti to be only dream. As the bird goes to its nest to recover from fatigue, so also does the jiiva, who is fatigued by the experiences of the waking and dream states, go to his abode, which is his own self, free from all attributes and devoid of all exertion caused by action. In this state he becomes one with the supreme Self, as the following quotation from Ch.up, shows.

Ch.up. 6.8.1.S.B. - - - tatra hi aadars'aapanayane - - - - - - - - mana aakhyaam hitvaa.

Just as the reflection of a person in a mirror appears to merge back in the person himself when the mirror is removed, so also, in deep sleep, when the mind and organs become dormant, the supreme Being who had entered the mind as a reflection attains his true nature, giving up his appearance as an individual soul, which is called the mind.

Ch. up. 6.8.1.S.B. yadaa svapiti iti uchyate - - - - - - - - - gamyate iti abhipraayaH.

When a person is in deep sleep, he becomes identified with Existence (Brahman). Having discarded his nature as an individual soul he attains his own self, his own nature, which is the ultimate Reality.

Ch.up.6.9.2. S.B. yathaayam dr.shTaantaH - - - - - - - -

All these creatures, after merging in Existence day after day during deep sleep do not know that they had so merged.

Ch.up.6.9.3. S.B. yasmaat cha evam aatmanaH - - - - - - - vaasanaa saa na nas'yati ityarthah.

Since they merge in Existence without knowing that it is their own nature, they wake up again as the same beings as before. Their vaasanaas do not get destroyed. (The implication is that the vaasanaas continue and they are born again and again in accordance with them, as long as they do not realize that they are in reality Brahman).

Br.up.4.3.15.S.B. tatra charitvaa iti - - - - -

'Roaming' in that state of dream and becoming fatigued, and thereafter going to the state of deep sleep, he comes back to the dream state and then to the waking state.

Br.up.4.3.17.S.B. na, kaarakaavabhaasatvena - - - - - - na lipyate kriyaaphalena.

No. The self does not do anything even in the waking state. Its being looked upon as an agent is merely attributable to its revealing the actions (performed by the body). Agency is attributed to the self because of the limiting adjuncts such as the body and is not natural to it. See V.C. verse 131 -- Because of whose mere presence, the body, sense - organs, mind and intellect perform their functions as if prompted (by it).

Br.up.4.3.18.S.B - - - evam ayam purushaH aatmaa - - - - - - - vilakshaNaH. - - Thus it has been brought out in the preceding paragraphs that the self is itself the light and is different from the body and organs as well as their causes, desire and action and is not attached to them. We know that it is not attached, because it moves from the waking to the dream state and then to the state of deep sleep and again back to the dream and then the waking state, proving that it is distinct from all these three states. To explain this further, an illustration is given here. Just as a big fish in a river moves freely from one bank to the other, never affected by the currents of the river, so does this infinite being move to both the states of dream and waking. The point of this illustration is that the body and organs, which are described as forms of death, together with their causes, desire and action, are the attributes of the non - self and that the self is distinct from them.

Br.up.4.3.6.S.B - - - sushuptaat cha utthaanam - - - We awake from deep sleep with the remembrance that we slept happily and knew nothing.

Br.up.4.3.21.S.B - - - sa yadi aatmaa avinashTah - - - - - - - duHkhii veti veda. - - - - - A doubt may arise -- If the self remains unaffected and in its own form during deep sleep, why does it not know itself then or know all other things, as it does in the waking and dream states? The reason is unity. This is explained by the s'ruti with an illustration. As a man, when fully embraced by his beloved wife, both desiring each other's company, does not know anything at all, either external, such as 'This is something other than myself', or internal, such as 'I am happy or unhappy', but he knows everything external and internal when he is not embraced by her and is separated, so also, this infinite being, the individual self, who is separated from the supreme Self (in the waking and dream states) because of having entered the body and organs, like the reflection of the moon in water, becomes unified with the supreme Self in deep sleep and does not know anything external or internal, such as 'I am happy or unhappy'.

Br.up.4.3.22.S.B. - - - atra cha etat prakr.tam - - - - - - - - "In this state a father is no father, a mother is no mother, worlds are no worlds, the gods are no gods, the Vedas are no Vedas. In this state a thief is no thief, the killer of a noble braahmaNa is no killer, and so on".

The form of the self that is directly perceived in the state of deep sleep is free from ignorance, desire and action. The s'ruti says that in this state a father is no father. His fatherhood towards a son is on account of the action of begetting. Since he is dissociated from all action in the state of deep sleep he is not a father then. Similarly, the son ceases to be a son in the state of deep sleep. All other relationships also cease to apply in this state.

Br.up.4.3.23.S.B. - - - striipumsayoriva ekatvaat - - - - drashTr.bhaavinii hi saa. - - - It was said that the self does not experience anything during deep sleep because of unity and this was illustrated by the example of a couple. It was also said that the self is pure consciousness. Now the doubt arises -- if consciousness is the very nature of the self, just as heat is of fire, how can it give up that nature even in sleep and fail to see anything? The answer is - the reason for its not seeing anything in sleep is that there is then no second thing separate from it which it can see. What caused the particular vision in the waking and dream states, namely, the mind, the eyes and forms, were all presented by nescience as something different from the self. They are all unified in the state of deep sleep. The organs and objects are not there as separate entities in sleep. There is therefore no particular experience, for such experience is produced by the organs and objects and not by the self, and only appear as produced by the self. But the vision of the self can never be lost.

Br.up.4.3.32.S.B. - - - yatra punaH saa avidyaa - - - - - - s'rutivachanametat.

When, however, that ignorance which projects things other than the self is at rest, in the state of deep sleep, what can one see, smell, or know and through what? Then, being fully embraced by the self - luminous supreme Self, the jiiva becomes infinite, perfectly serene, with all his desires attained. Then there is no second entity different from the self to be seen. In deep sleep the self, freed of its limiting adjuncts, remains in its own supreme light, free from all relationships.

Br.up.4.3.32.S.B. - - - etasyaiva aanandasya anyaani - - - - - - vibhaavyamaanaam. - - - On a particle of this very bliss, projected by ignorance, and perceived only during the contact of the organs with objects, all other beings are sustained. Who are they? Those who have been separated from that bliss by nescience and consider themselves as different from Brahman. Being thus different, they subsist on a fraction of that bliss which is experienced through the contact of the sense - organs with their objects. (It follows from this that when one realizes one's identity with Brahman one enjoys this bliss in its plenitude, nay, one becomes that very bliss itself).

In Panchadas'i, ch.15, the process by which one experiences happiness in the waking state is explained. Any happiness experienced by any person is really nothing but the bliss of Brahman. As long as there is some unfulfilled desire, the mind remains agitated. When the desire is fulfilled the mind becomes temporarily calm and sattvaguNa becomes predominant. In such a mind the bliss of the self becomes reflected clearly, The happiness experienced is therefore the result of the mind having become calm, but it is wrongly attributed by people to the fulfillment of the desire. When the mind is

free from all desire, when there is total detachment, the bliss of the self is experienced in its fullness. So it is said in Panchadas'I,15.18 that the greatest happiness results only from detachment.

MaND.up.5.S.B. - - - manasaH vishayavishayyaakaara - - - - - -

He is full of joy (in the state of deep sleep), his abundance of joy being caused by the absence of the suffering involved in the effort of the mind in experiencing objects; but he is not Bliss itself, since the joy is not absolute.

19. Jiiva (Individual Soul)

The Jiiva is defined in Panchadas'i 4.11 thus: - The substratum or the pure consciousness, the subtle body, and the reflection of pure consciousness in the subtle body together constitute the jiiva.

Panchadas'i 3.41 - - - Brahman when looked upon as associated with the five sheaths (kos'as) is known as the jiiva, just as a man is called a father or a grandfather in relation to his son or grandson. Verse 42 says -- As a man is neither a father nor a grandfather when considered apart from his son or grandson, so Brahman is neither iis'vara nor jiiva when not considered as associated with maayaa or the five sheaths.

MaaNDuukya Kaarikaa 1.16 - - - When the jiiva who is sleeping under the influence of beginningless maaya is awakened, he realizes the birthless, sleepless, dreamless, non - dual (Brahman). The waking and dream states are both considered to be only dream, because, in both states the Reality is not known and only what is unreal is experienced and is looked upon wrongly as real. In sleep there is ignorance of the Reality, though there is no projection of what is unreal. Both dream and deep sleep in this sense are absent in Brahman. So it is said that Brahman is dreamless and sleepless. By saying that Brahman is birthless it is implied that it does not undergo any of the changes which everything in this world is subject to. When the jiiva becomes free from nescience or maayaa, he ceases to be a jiiva and realizes his real nature as Brahman.
Br.up.2.5.15.S.B. - - - puurvamapi brahmaiva sat - - - - sarvaH saH sarvam abhavat.

Even before realization one was always Brahman, but through ignorance one considered oneself different from Brahman; one has always been all, but through ignorance one considered oneself otherwise. By getting rid of this ignorance through the knowledge of Brahman, the knower of Brahman, who has always been Brahman, is said to have 'become' Brahman. Having always been all, he is said to have 'become' all. The idea is that every individual, even when he considers himself as a transmigrating entity, is really Brahman

alone. He has only to realize this truth. Bondage being not real, but only the result of ignorance of this truth, it can be removed only by the knowledge of the truth. If a thorn has actually pierced the skin of a person, the pain caused can be removed only by the action of removing the thorn. But if one's suffering is due to having mistaken a rope for a snake, that suffering can be removed only by the knowledge that there is only a rope and not a snake and not by any action. So also, bondage, which is only due to wrongly considering oneself as the body, mind and organs, can be eradicated only by the realization that one is the Self which is beyond all suffering.

jiiva and saakshii - - difference

When the self is looked upon as qualified by the internal organ, that is to say, when the self and the internal organ are considered as inseparable, the self is called jiiva. So the jiiva is described as antaHkaraNa - vis'ishTa - chaitanyam. The jiiva is therefore looked upon as an agent and enjoyer, by attributing the qualities of the internal organ to it.

When the internal organ is considered as merely an adjunct (upaadhi) of the self, the self is known as saakshii or witness. In such a concept, the agency and enjoyment as well as the various changes of the internal organ do not at all affect the self, which is a mere witness to them. The self is, in this case, known as saakshii or antaHkaraNa - upahita - chaitanyam or the self with the internal organ as the upaadhi.

Both these terms apply only in the empirical stage, when there is nescience. The self becomes a seer only when it is qualified by the internal organ. It becomes a witness only in the presence of the internal organ. By itself, the self is neither a seer, hearer, etc, nor a witness.

B.S.2.3.17.S.B - - - It is pointed out here that the jiiva has no birth or death. The s'ruti clearly denies birth to the jiiva - "Unborn, eternal" (kaTha. 1.2.18). "This great birthless self" (Br.up.4.4.25). It is Brahman, the one without a second, that enters the intellect and appears as the jiiva. The taitt.up.2.6 says -- "Having created it, Brahman entered into it".

B.S.2.3.18.S.B. - - - The Vais'eshikas say that consciousness is not the very nature of the jiiva, because it is not found to be conscious in deep sleep. This is refuted by this suutra by saying that it is Brahman itself that, being limited by the body - mind complex, appears as the jiiva. Therefore consciousness is its very nature and is not destroyed even in sleep.

B.S.2.3.29.S.B. - - - This suutra refutes the view that the jiiva is atomic. Since the jiiva is none other than the supreme Brahman, it is also infinite.

B.S.2.3.40.S.B. - - - The Nyaaya view that agency of the jiiva is real is refuted here and it is said that agency is only superimposed on the jiiva. The s'ruti says -- "This aatmaa is unattached" (Br.up.4.3.15). All scriptural injunctions are with reference to the conditioned aspect of the self which is due to nescience. In its essential nature the jiiva is actionless, but appears to act only because of association with the upaadhi in the form of the body - mind complex.

B.S.2.3.43.S.B. - - - Here it is clarified that the statements in the scriptures describing the jiiva as a spark from a fire mean only that it is identical with Brahman and not a part of Brahman in the literal sense, since Brahman cannot have any parts.

B.S.2.3.46.S.B. - - - Though the jiiva is described as a part of Brahman or God, God does not experience pleasure and pain like the jiiva, who, on account of ignorance of his real nature, attributes to himself the joys and sorrows of the body and mind. If the jiiva realizes that he is different from the body and mind, he will also have no suffering. God is beyond the control of maayaa or nescience and does not identify Himself with the bodies. He does not therefore experience any suffering. This point has been dealt with in the Bhaashya on B.G. 13.2 also, in a very elaborate manner.

B.S.2.3.49.S,B. - - - It may be argued that if the same Brahman dwells in all bodies, everyone may have to experience the results of the actions of everyone else. This suutra dispels this doubt. A particular jiiva is connected only with a particular body - mind complex and so the jiivas are different from one another(as jiivas).

B.S.2.3.50.S.B. - - - The jiiva is only a reflection of Brahman in the internal organ (mind). The reflections in different minds are different, like the reflections of the sun in different vessels of water. Therefore, just as the trembling of a particular reflection of the sun cannot cause any disturbance to the other reflections, so also the experiences or the karma of any particular jiiva cannot affect other jiivas.

Iis'vara's creation and jiiva's creation

In Panchadas'i - 4.17to 4.40 a distinction is made between God's creation and creation by the individual souls. Though all objects in the world are created by God, their enjoyment and the reaction of each individual towards a particular object depend on his karma and the vaasanas in his mind. A gem, which is a creation of God, may produce different reactions in different persons. One man may feel happy on having got the gem, while another man is unhappy because he has not been able to get it. Another person may not be interested at all in the gem and so may not feel either joy or sorrow on

seeing it. (Verses20 and 21). The Jiiva creates these three feelings of happiness, disappointment and indifference with regard to the gem, but the nature of the gem as created by God remains the same. Verse 31 says that every object has two aspects, the material and the mental. The material aspect always remains the same, but the mental aspect varies according to the mental make - up of the person who sees it. Moreover, though God has created all objects, the extent to which each individual is able to get them is dependent on his karma. It is therefore said in verse 19 that for the actual enjoyment of objects it is the modifications or functions of the mind of the jiiva that are responsible. An example is given in verses 34 and 35 to show that the cause of a man's bondage and suffering is his own mental world. When a man was told by someone that his son who was in a far - off place was dead, he began to cry, though the news was not true. But even if the son had actually died, but he had not received the news, he would have felt no grief. In a dream, even though no objects are actually present, a person feels joy and sorrow, but in deep sleep, no joy or sorrow is felt, even if there are objects around (verse 33). Verse 42 says that the world of duality created by God is rather a help than an obstacle to the realization of non - duality. It is the creation of the jiiva that is the cause of suffering. By controlling the mind one can ultimately attain realization of the non - dual Brahman (verse 64).

Different theories about the nature of jiiva and iis'vara

Among Advaitins there are three different theories on this point. These are described in Vichaara saagara, ch.6, para 449 onwards.
1. aabhaasavaada (Semblance theory) -- This is the vaada or theory adopted in Panchadas'i. According to this, the jiiva is an aabhaasa or semblance of Brahman in the internal organ which is an effect of avidyaa. This reflection or semblance is mithyaa or illusory. In B.S.2.3.50.S.B it is said - - The jiiva is an aabhaasa or semblance of the supreme Self, like the semblance of the sun in water. The jiiva is not the Self itself, nor is it something different.

In the Bhaashya on Ch.up.6.3.2 S'rii S'ankara says that the jiiva is an aabhaasa or semblance of the supreme Being.

2. pratibimbavaada (Reflection theory) -- This is the theory adopted by the author of VivaraNa, Prakaas'aatma Muni. According to this, jiiva is the reflection of iis'vara who is the bimba or the original in avidyaa. iis'vara, according to this theory, is Brahman or pure consciousness itself. Omniscience, etc, are not His natural qualities. But in relation to jiiva who has limited knowledge, power, etc, the qualities of being a bimba, iis'vara, etc, are superimposed. In this theory, the reflection, jiiva, is not mithyaa, but real. This theory is expressed in Amr.tabindu upanishad,12 --

The one Self appears as different in different beings. It appears as one and as many, like (the reflection of) the moon in water. See also B.S.3.2.18.S.B.

3. avachchhedavaada (Limitation theory) -- This is the view of the author of Bhaamatii, Vaachaspati Mis'ra. In this theory the jiiva is a delimitation of consciousness by the internal organ, while iis'vara is not so limited. This theory is employed by GauDapaada and S'ankara in MaaNDuukya Kaarikaa, 3.3 to 7. It is said in the Bhaashya on 3.3: - The Self is subtle, partless and all - pervasive like space. The Self is spoken of as existing in the form of jiivas in the same way as space is referred to as existing in the form of spaces circumscribed by pots. The idea implied is that the emergence of jiivas from the supreme Self is comparable to the emergence of the spaces in different pots from the same all - pervading space.

Trees also have consciousness

Ch.up.6.11.2.S.B - - - vr.kshasya rasasravaNa - - - - - That a tree is also a jiiva is indicated by such signs as exudation and drying up of sap. From the illustration in the S'ruti that non - moving beings also have consciousness, the view of the Buddhists and the Vais'eshikas that these have no consciousness is proved to be wrong.

20. Iis'vara

Panchadas'i - 6.157 - - - iis'vara is the aabhaasa or semblance of Brahman in maayaa which is prakr.ti constituted of pure sattva. He controls maayaa and is the antaryaamii or Inner Controller of all beings. He is omniscient and is the cause of the universe.

According to the reflection theory iis'vara is the bimba and the jiiva is His reflection or pratibimba in maayaa. In both the theories God is omniscient. There is no obstruction to his knowledge by nescience, because of the absence of the veil in the form of gross and subtle bodies (Samkshepa s'aariirakam 2.176).

Br.up.3.7 - - - antaryaami braahmaNam -- iis'vara as the antaryaamii controls all beings from within.

B.S.1.2.20.S.B - - - In Br.up. 3.7 the Inner Controller is distinguished from the embodied soul. But this distinction is based on the limiting adjunct in the form of the body and organs, conjured up by nescience; the distinction is not real. The indwelling Self can be only one, not two. The one Self is spoken of as two because of the limiting adjuncts, like the space inside a pot being looked upon as different from the total space. All the statements in the Vedas about

the difference between the knower and the known, doership and enjoyership, as well as all injunctions and prohibitions are based on this standpoint. The text "Because when there is duality, as it were, then one sees another, etc " (Br.up.2.4.14) shows that all dealings are only in the state of ignorance, while the text "But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, what (other thing) can he see and through what (sense - organ)" denies all such activity after the rise of Self - knowledge.

Br.up.3.8.12 - - - When Brahman has as the limiting adjunct the power of eternal and infinite knowledge (maayaa) it is called iis'vara or antaryaamii.

B.S.1.1.20.S.B - - - God may take various forms at His will through His power of maayaa to bless devotees.

B.S.2.1.34,35.S.B - - - No partiality or cruelty can be attributed to God because of the inequality found in creation. The difference is due to the merits or demerits of individuals, acquired as a result of actions in past births. God is comparable to rain. While rain is the common cause of the sprouting of all seeds sown, the nature of the sprout depends on the seed. Similarly, while God is the common cause of all creation, the nature of a particular individual's life depends on the seed he has sown in the form of actions in past births. God cannot therefore be considered responsible for the inequalities in the world. Creation is without any beginning and so there is no such thing as the first birth of a particular individual for which it could be said that there would be no cause in the form of past karma.

B.S.2.3.46.S.B - - - God does not undergo suffering as the jiiva does, because He has no identification with the body. Even the jiiva will become free from all suffering when he gives up identification with the two bodies and realizes that he is the pure Self, untouched by anything that happens to the body or mind. It is further pointed out here that while a reflection of the sun in a vessel of water may shake when the water shakes, the sun itself is not at all affected, so also God is not affected, though the individual soul may be, by what happens to the limiting adjuncts.

B.S.3.2.38,39.S.B - - - The fruits of all actions are given by God. The fruit cannot emerge out of apuurva, the unseen potency, which, being insentient, cannot act unless stimulated by some conscious agent. This suutra refutes the view of the Miimaamsakas that karma itself gives the result through apuurva and it is not necessary to postulate a God for the purpose.

B.S.2.1.14.S.B - - - sarvajnasya iis'varasya aatmabhuute - - - - - - - - - -

Name and form which constitute the seeds of the entire phenomenal existence and which are the products of nescience are non - different from the omniscient God and cannot be classified either as real or as unreal. They are described in the Vedas and the Smr.tis as the power of God, called maayaa. Like space being apparently limited by a pot, etc, God appears limited by the limiting adjuncts in the form of name and form, which are created by nescience. And within the domain of empirical existence God rules over the selves which identify themselves with the individual minds and which are, in essence, identical with God. Thus God's rulership, omniscience and omnipotence are based on the limiting adjuncts conjured up by nescience; but in reality such terms as 'ruler', 'ruled', 'omniscience', etc, are not applicable when speaking of the Self, shining in its own pure nature, after the cessation of the limiting adjuncts as a result of right knowledge. Therefore all the upanishads declare the cessation of all empirical dealings in the state of the Highest Reality. It is with reference to this unconditioned Brahman that the Lord says in B.G. 5.14 and 15: - - "Neither agency nor action does the Lord create for the world, nor does he bring about the union with the fruit of action. It is nature or maayaa that does all that. The omnipresent Lord does not take note of the merit and demerit of anyone. Knowledge is covered by ignorance and so all beings become deluded". It is seen from this that in the state of the Highest Reality all transactions like those between the ruler and the ruled, etc, cease to exist. But within the state of phenomenal existence, even the s'ruti speaks of divine rulership, etc, as in Br.up. 4.4.22: - - "He is the Lord of all. He is the ruler of all beings. He is the protector of all. He is the embankment that serves as the boundary to keep the different worlds apart". (Thus the difference between the standpoints from which the unconditioned Brahman, on the one hand, and the conditioned Brahman or God, on the other, are spoken of is brought out here).

21. Maayaa

Panchadas'i.6.130 - - - From the standpoint of the ordinary worldly man, maayaa is real. From the standpoint of the man of realization, maayaa has no existence at all. For those who try to understand it through reasoning, maayaa cannot be determined as either real or unreal; it is anirvachaniiya.

S'rii S'ankara says in maayaapanchakam that maayaa has the capacity to make the impossible happen. It imposes on Brahman, which is eternal and devoid of parts and which is pure Consciousness, the false distinctions as the world, individual souls and God. It makes even those who have mastered all the scriptures no different from animals by tempting them with wealth and the like. It makes Brahman which is infinite bliss, pure Consciousness and non - dual, struggle in the ocean of samsaara by associating it with the body made up of the five elements. It imposes on Brahman which is devoid of qualities the distinctions of colour, caste, etc, and attachment to wife, son, possessions

and the like. It creates even in non - dual Brahman distinctions such as Brahmaa, Vishnu and S'iva and deludes even the learned into thinking that they are different from one another.

S'v.up.4.10 - - - prakr.ti is maayaa and the supreme Lord is the wielder of maayaa.

V.C. verse 110 - - - maayaa is called 'Unmanifest'. It is the power of Parames'vara, the supreme Lord. It is beginningless Nescience. It is constituted of the three guNas, sattva, rajas and tamas. Its existence cannot be directly known, but can only be inferred from its effects. It is the cause of this universe.

V.C.verse 111 - - - it is neither real, nor unreal, nor both. It is neither different from Brahman, nor non - different, nor both. It is neither possessed of parts, nor without parts, nor both. It is most wonderful and is of indescribable nature.

V.C.verse 112 - - - This maayaa can be destroyed by the realization of the pure non - dual Brahman just as the illusory snake is negated by the knowledge of the rope which is its sub - stratum.

B.G.7.14 - - - The Lord says -- " This divine maayaa of Mine is difficult to overcome. Those who take refuge in Me alone can cross over this maayaa".

B.G.13.1.S.B - - - prakr.tis'cha triguNaatmikaa - - - - -

It is prakr.ti or maayaa made up of the three guNas that has become transformed as all the bodies, organs and objects for subserving the ends of the individual souls, namely, enjoyment and liberation.

22. Jnaanam and Dhyaanam - Difference

B.S.1.1.4.S.B. - - - nanu jnaanam naama maanasii kriyaa. na, vailakshaNyaat - - - - - - - - veditavyam.

jnaanam (knowledge) is not a mental act, because there is a difference (between knowledge and meditation). A mental act is seen to exist where there is an injunction about it, which is independent of the nature of the thing concerned. dhyaanam (meditation), is a mental act, because it depends on the will of the person performing it. For example, to think of a man or woman as fire, as enjoined in " O Gautama, man is surely fire" (Ch.up.5.7.1) , or in "O Gautama, woman is surely fire" (Ch.up.5.8.1) is certainly a mental act, since it arises from an injunction alone. But the idea of fire with regard to the well - known fire is not dependent on any injunction or on the will of any man. (In other words, thinking of one thing as another, like a linga as Lord S'iva and

worshipping it as such, is meditation and it is a mental act, because it depends on the will of the worshipper. But looking at an ordinary stone and seeing it as a stone is knowledge and is not a mental act, because it does not depend on the will of the person). While meditation depends on the will of a person, knowledge depends only on the object concerned and on valid means of knowledge, such as perception. Meditation is therefore described as purusha - tantra (dependent on the person), while knowledge is called vastu - tantra (dependent on the object to be known).

23. Karma

The word 'karma' is used in two different senses in Vedaanta - - - (1) the results of actions performed, in the form of merit and demerit (puNya and paapa), which produce their effects later on, usually in another birth, and (2) the action itself, whether secular or religious. We shall deal with the first category here. The second will be dealt with subsequently.

Karma, in the sense of results of actions performed, is divided into three categories . (1) sanchita karma -- the accumulated results of actions performed in past births, (2) praarabdha karma - - those results of past actions which have given rise to the present body and (3) aagaami karma -- the results of actions performed in the present birth. On the dawn of Self - knowledge the first category is completely destroyed along with the third category acquired upto the time of attainment of knowledge. After the dawn of Self - knowledge any action performed does not produce any result in the form of merit or demerit. The second category is not destroyed on the attainment of Self - knowledge, but has to be exhausted only by being actually experienced. On the exhaustion of this category of karma the body of the enlightened person falls and the jiivanmukta becomes a videhamukta.

Br.up.1.4.7.S.B - - - s'ariiraarambhakasya karmaNaH niyataphalatvaat - - - - - - - - - anyaarthaasambhavaat.

The past actions that gave rise to the present body must necessarily produce their results and so the body, mind and organs will continue to function even after the attainment of Self - knowledge, just as an arrow that has already been discharged must continue to move forward until its force is exhausted. The operation of Self - knowledge, which is weaker than the praarabdha karma, is liable to be affected by the latter. There is therefore need to keep up the train of remembrance of the knowledge of the Self by means of renunciation of action and detachment.

Br.up.1.4.10.S.B - - - yena karmaNaa s'ariiram aarabdham - - - - itarat.

The residue of praarabdha karma is the cause of the body continuing even after the attainment of knowledge. Knowledge cannot prevent the results of this category of Karma from producing their effect, since the two are not contradictory to each other.

Ch.up.6.14.2.S.B - - - yaani pravr.ttaphalaani - - -

Those actions which have started yielding results and by which the body of the man of knowledge was brought into existence get exhausted only by their results being actually experienced, just as an arrow that has gathered momentum after having been discharged stops only when the momentum is exhausted.

Br.up.4.4.22.S.B - - - s'ariiraarambhakayostu upabhogenaiva kshayaH

Actions that caused the present body are exhausted only by the results being experienced.

B.G.4.37.S.B - - - Since the karma because of which the present body came into existence has already taken effect, it gets exhausted only by being experienced. Self - knowledge destroys only those actions performed in past lives and in the present life prior to the dawn of knowledge which have not yet taken effect. Actions performed after the dawn of knowledge do not produce any effect in the form of merit or demerit.

Karma in the sense of the actual action, both religious and secular.

Br.up.1.3.1.S.B - - - yathaa svargakaamaadidoshavataH - karmaavasaraH asti

As the rites with material ends (kaamya karma), such as the new and full moon sacrifices, are enjoined on one who desires to attain heaven,etc, so are the regular and obligatory rites (nitya and naimittika karma) on one who has the root of all evils, namely ignorance, and the consequent defects of attachment and aversion, manifesting themselves as the quest for what is pleasant and avoidance of the unpleasant. Rites such as agnihotra, chaaturmaasya, pas'ubandha and somayaaga are not intrinsically either rites with material ends (kaamya) or obligatory rites (nitya).They come under the former category only when they are performed with desire for results such as heaven. (The same rites can also be performed without desire for the result, in which case they become nishkaama karma and have the effect of purifying the mind and making it fit for Self - knowledge). No rites are enjoined in the scriptures for one who has realized the true nature of the Self. Self - knowledge arises only on the obliteration of the very cause of rites. One who has realized that he is Brahman has no obligation to perform even the

obligatory rites. (They are not applicable to him, though he may still perform them to set an example to others or for the general welfare, as stated by the Lord in the Bhagavad - gita).

The aspirant for liberation must worship the gods by means of the rites prescribed for him - - - - Br.up.1.4.10.S.B - - - tasmaat mumukshuH -- Therefore the mumukshu should be devoted to the worship of the gods. (Here is another instance where S'rii S'ankara stresses the need for devotion even for an aspirant for liberation. This disproves the contention of some that there is no place for devotion in Advaita).

Br.up.3.3.1.S.B - - - tasmaat saabhisandhiinaam - - - - - - - - - - phalaani

Therefore the obligatory rites and rites like sarvamedha and as'vamedha performed with desire for the fruit lead to the attainment of oneness with hiraNyagarbha, etc.

yeshaam punaH nityaani nirabhisandhiini - - - - - - - - - - - -

But in the case of those who perform the obligatory rites without desire for the fruit, merely for the purification of the mind, the rites help towards the attainment of Self - knowledge.

B.G.18.9.S.B - - - nityaanaam karmaNaam - - - - - - phalam cha iti - - -

We said that the Lord's utterance is proof of the fact that nitya and naimittika karma also yield fruit. Or, even if these are considered to be devoid of any fruit on the ground that no fruit is mentioned in the s'ruti, still the ordinary, unenlightened man does certainly think that these produce a result in the form of purification of the mind or avoidance of evil. The Lord indicates by the words 'giving up the fruit' that even this thought should be given up.

See also the commentary of Aanandagiri on Br.up.1.3.1.

Br.up.3.5.1.S.B - - - na hi paramaarthaavadhaaraNa - - - - - - - - - -

We do not postulate the existence of things different from Brahman in the state when one is established in the highest truth. See 'one only without a second' (2.5.19) and 'without interior or exterior' (3.8.8). Nor do we deny the validity, for the unenlightened, of actions with their factors and results as long as the relative world of name and form is accepted as existent.

Br.up.4.4.22.S.B - - - vedaanuvachana - yajna - daana - tapaH - s'abdena - - - - - - - - ekavaakyataavagatiH.

The words 'study of the Vedas, sacrifices, charity and austerity' refer to all obligatory rites (nitya karma). Thus all the obligatory rites (that is all those other than kaamya karma) serve as means to liberation through the attainment of Self - knowledge. Hence we see that the ultimate purpose of the two parts of the Vedas, that dealing with rites and that dealing with Self - knowledge, is the same, (namely liberation).

Br.up.4.4.22.S.B - - - Commentary of Aanandagiri - - - aatmalokam ichchhataam mumukshuuNaam - - - - - vaktavyam ityarthaH.

When the Vedas speak of renunciation of action even for the mumukshu, is it necessary to point out that there is no action to be performed by one who has already realized the Self? (It must be mentioned here that one becomes fit to called a mumukshu only when one has attained total detachment. In his Bhaashya on B.G.4.11, S'rii S'ankara says that a person cannot be a mumukshu and have desire for other fruits also at the same time. Thus only a yogaaruuDha, one who has attained total detachment, is a mumukshu).

taitt.up.1.1.S.B - - - nityaanaam cha akaraNam - - - - - - - - The mere non - performance of the obligatory duties cannot give rise to a positive demerit (paapa), because something positive cannot arise from a mere negation (abhaava). The failure on the part of a person to perform obligatory duties (laid down in the scriptures) is merely an indication that he has accumulated sins resulting from past actions. (The performance of the obligatory duties eradicates such accumulated sins, while, by their non - performance, the sins continue. Thus the view of Advaita Vedaanta in this matter is opposed to that of the Miimaamsakas who hold that non - performance produces a new sin). (A future sorrow is called a pratyavaaya, which, being a positive entity, cannot have a non - entity as its cause. For, according to Br.up.4.4.5, 'Sin arises from sin', sorrow is caused by the performance of prohibited actions -- Aanandagiri).

taitt.up.1.11.S.B - - - puurvopachitaduritakshaya - - - - - - - karmaaNi

The Vedic rites help in the attainment of Self - knowledge by eradicating the accumulated sins.

taitt.up.1.11.S.B - - - svaatmalaabhe tu puurvopachita - - - - - nityaaniiti.

For the attainment of Self - knowledge, the nitya karma becomes the means only by eradicating the obstruction in the form of accumulated sins. (karma cannot by itself lead to knowledge or liberation, because liberation is not something produced).

The fruit of karma is given by God

Br.up.3.8.9.S.B - - - tat cha karmaphalena - - - - - phalena samyojayitaa.

Awarding of the fruits of karma would be impossible if there were no ruler who, knowing the results of the various actions, unites the performer of action with its result. (The theory of apuurva of the Miimaamsakas is rejected. See also B.S.3.2.38&39.S.B under the head "iis'vara').

Br.up.4.4.5.S.B - - - tatra kaamakrodhaadipuurvaka - - - - - samsaarasya kaaraNam.

Doing good and bad deeds under the impulse of desire, anger, etc, is the cause of bondage and passing from one body to another.

atho api anye - - - - - kaamamaya eva iti. Others, however, say: - - It is under the influence of desire that man performs good and bad deeds. When desire is gone, any action performed does not lead to the accumulation of merit or demerit. Therefore desire is the root cause of transmigratory existence. As the MuND. Up. says - - - He who longs for objects of sense, thinking highly of them, is born along with those desires, in circumstances in which he can realize them. (3.2.2). Therefore the Self is identified with desire alone.

kaamya karma also produces some purity

Br.up.Bhaashya Vaartika, Sambandhabhaashya - verse 1130 says - - - purification does occur through kaamya karma also. But that is useful only for the enjoyment of the fruit of the karma (and not for liberation). Surely, one cannot enjoy the pleasures befitting Indra with the body of a hog (which is impure).

Br.up.4.5.15.S.B - - - karmaNaam cha avidvatvishayatvam - - - - vividishanti iti.

We have said that rites are for the unenlightened. As long as there is ignorance of the Self, there is need for the performance of rites which are intended to produce, attain, modify or purify. (These are the four kinds of results produced by action). Rites are the means to Self - knowledge through the purification of the mind.

Br.up.6.2.1.S.B - - - kevalena karmaNaa pitr.lokah - - - - - - devalokah.

Mere rites lead to the world of the manes and meditation combined with rites leads to heaven.

Ch.up.S.B. Introduction - - samastam karmaadhigatam - - - - -

Rites performed along with meditation on various deities lead to the attainment of Brahmaloka through the path of light (devayaana maarga). Rites alone (without meditation) lead to the world of the moon through the path of smoke, etc (pitr.yaana).

Rites performed with knowledge of the meaning of the mantras are more effective.

Ch.up.1.1.10.S.B - - - tasmaat yadeva vidyayaa vijnaanena - - - - - - bhavati iti abhipraayaH.

Therefore that rite which is performed with knowledge (of the meaning of the mantras), faith and meditation is more effective than the rites performed by a man who does not know the meaning. By declaring that a rite performed with knowledge of the meaning is more effective it is implied that a rite performed by an ignorant man also produces results, though it is less effective.

Ch.up.1.1.10.S.B - - - na cha avidushaH - - - - - - - It is not as if an ignorant man is not competent to perform rites, because in the story about Ushasta (Ch.up.1.10.1) it is seen that even a man ignorant of the meaning can be a priest in the performance of rites.

But Bhaskararaya says in his Varivasyaarahasyam,ch.2, verses 54 to 56 - The utterance of sound without a knowledge of the true import bears no fruit, and is only like an oblation poured into ashes. Those who merely recite various mantras without knowing their meaning may be compared to a donkey carrying a load of sandalwood.

The three debts (to the r.shis or sages, the manes and the gods) are only for householders.

B.S.1.1.1.Bhaamatii - - - ata eva na brahmachaariNaH - - - - - - -

Therefore for a brahmachaarii there are no debts (to sages, manes and gods), for the discharge of which rites would have to be performed. Accordingly, the statement "A BraahmaNa is born with three debts" should be explained as applicable only to householders. Otherwise the statement of the Veda "Or, let him renounce from the stage of brahmacharya itself " would be contradicted. Even for the householder the discharge of these three debts is only for the purpose of purification of the mind.

The same is stated also in the Introduction to Ait. Up. Bhashya.

B.S.1.1.1. Bhaamatii - - - tathaa hi - nityakarmaanushThaanaat - - - - - karmaNaam yuktam.

From the performance of the obligatory rites merit (puNya) is generated; as a result, demerit (paapa) is attenuated; it is that demerit that made the mind impure through wrongly looking upon what is transient, impure and miserable as eternal, pure and pleasant. On the cessation of paapa the world is recognized as impermanent, impure and the cause of misery. Thus the obligatory rites are the remote means for the attainment of Self - knowledge.

24. Mukti (Liberation)

Liberation is only cessation of nescience
Br.up.4.4.6.S.B - - - tasmaat avidyaanivr.ttimaatre mokshavyavahaaraH - - - - - - - sarpaadinivr.ttiH.

Therefore, as we have already said, the cessation of ignorance alone is what is known as liberation, like the disappearance of the snake, for instance, from the rope when the wrong notion about its existence has been eradicated.

Br.up.4.4.7.S.B - - - ataH mokshaH na des'aantaragamanaadi apekshate.

Therefore, liberation does not imply going to another place (world), etc.

Br.up.4.4.20.S.B - - - jnaanam cha tasmin paraatmabhaavanivr.ttiH eva. - iti ubhayam api aviruddham eva.

The knowledge of Brahman means only the cessation of identification with external things (such as the body, etc). Identity with Brahman is not something which requires to be attained, since it is always there. Everyone is in reality always identical with Brahman, but wrongly considers himself to be something different (due to ignorance). Therefore the scriptures do not enjoin that identity with Brahman should be attained, but only that the false identification with things other than Brahman should be given up. When the identification with other things (such as the body) is eradicated, the identity with one's own Self, which is natural, prevails. This is what is meant by the statement that the Self is realized. In itself the Self is unknowable, that is to say it cannot be made the object of any means of knowledge (pramaaNa).

taitt.up. 1.1.S.B - - - aatmaa hi brahma - - - parapraaptiH.

The Self, indeed, is Brahman. The attainment of the highest will be declared for the knower of Brahman (taitt.up.2.1.1). Therefore the establishment in one's own Self, on the eradication of ignorance, is itself the attainment of the highest, namely, liberation.

B.S.3.4.52.S.B - - - brahma eva hi muktyavasthaa.

The state of liberation is itself Brahman.

B.S.3.4.52.S.B - - - tat hi asaadhyam nityasiddhasvabhaavam - - - - - - - iti asakr.t avadishma.

We have said more than once that liberation is not an effect to be attained; it is only to be realized through knowledge, since it is eternally existent. (It is not some thing to be brought into existence by any action, since it is ever present and has only to be realized as such).

taitt.up.1.11.S.B - - - ato vidyotpattyartham anushTheyaani karmaaNi.

The rites laid down have to be performed for the attainment of Self - knowledge (because they purify the mind and make it fit for the rise of knowledge).

taitt. up.1.11.S.B - - - yathaa praaptameva kaarakaastitvam upaadaaya - - - - - virodhaH.

The scriptures, on the assumption of the existence of the accessories of action (such as doer, etc), enjoin rites intended to eradicate the accumulated sins of those who aspire for liberation and also as a means for the attainment of various results for those who hanker after them. They do not however, at this stage, concern themselves with the question of the reality of those accessories. The rise of Self - knowledge is unimaginable for a person who has hindrances in the form of accumulated sins. On the attenuation of those sins, knowledge will emerge and nescience will be eradicated, resulting in the realization of the illusory nature of the world. A person who perceives something as different from himself may develop a craving for it. Impelled by desire, he engages himself in action. From that follows the succession of further births for enjoying the fruits of those actions. On the other hand, for a person who sees everything as the Self, no desire can arise. Such a person remains established in the Self and is liberated from further birth. It follows from this that Self - knowledge and karma (action) are opposed to each other.

taitt.up. 1.11.S.B - - - ataH kevalaayaaH eva vidyaayaaH param s'reyaH iti siddham.

Thus it is established that liberation is attained through knowledge alone.

taitt. up. 1.11.S.B - - - yato janmaantarakr.tamapi - - - - ishyate.

The karmas such as agnihotra and practices such as celibacy, etc, performed in past lives also help the dawn of knowledge. It is because of this that some persons are found to possess detachment even from their birth itself, while

others are seen to be attached to the world and not inclined towards enlightenment. Therefore, for those who have become free from attachment to worldly pursuits as a result of tendencies acquired in past lives it is desirable to resort to the other stages of life (such as sannyaasa).

taitt. up, 1.11.S.B - - - sarveshaam cha adhikaaraH vidyaayaam - - - - iti siddham.

Persons belonging to all aas'ramas are entitled to Self - realization. Liberation comes from Self - knowledge alone (and not through any karma, though karma must be performed in the spirit of karma - yoga for attaining fitness for knowledge).

B.S.3.4.36 to 39.S.B - - - Even those who do not belong to any aas'rama are entitled to attain Self - knowledge (e.g. Raikva, Gaargii).

Br.up.1.4.7.S.B - - - na hi vedaanteshu brahmaatmavijnaanaat anyat - - - - - - - - avagamyate.

In Vedaanta (upanishads) nothing is spoken of as a means to realization except the knowledge of the identity of the self and Brahman. (This is said while refuting the contention that Yoga is also by itself a means to liberation. While Patanjali's Yoga helps by developing one - pointedness of the mind, it does not postulate the identity of the self and Brahman as Advaita does).

People of the present day can also attain Self - knowledge.

Br.up.1.4.10.S.B - - - seyam brahmavidyayaa sarvabhaavaapattih - - - - - tadvijnaanasya asti.

Some may think that the gods were able to realize this identity with all through the knowledge of Brahman because of their extraordinary powers, but persons of the present age, particularly men, can never attain it because of their limited capacity. In order to remove this wrong notion, it is said here -- "And even this day, whoever, curbing his interest in external things, strives for Self - knowledge, can attain it. - - - - - - - - There is no difference as regards Brahman or the knowledge of It, between giants like Vamadeva and the human weaklings of today".

Br.up.3.3.1.S.B - - - ajnaanavyavadhaananivartakatvaat jnaanasya mokshaH jnaanakaaryam iti uchyate.
Because Self - knowledge removes the obstruction in the form of ignorance, liberation is metaphorically said to be the result of knowledge. (Liberation is not really an effect or result at all, since it is already existent in the sense that there is really no bondage at all).

Br.up.3.3.1.S.B - - - na cha ajnaanavyatirekeNa mokshasya - - - - - - - yat karmaNaa nivartyeta.

We cannot imagine any other obstruction to liberation than ignorance, because liberation is identical with the self of the aspirant and is therefore eternal (and not something to be brought into existence by any karma).

Br.up.3.3.1.S.B - - - na aapyo api aatmasvabhaavatvaat ekatvaat cha.

Liberation is not something to be attained because it is identical with the Self and (the Self) is one (without a second).

Br.up.3.5.1.S.B - - - na hi paramaarthaavadhaaraNaanishThaayaam - - - kaachana virodhas'a.nkaa.

We do not maintain that things different from Brahman exist when the highest truth has been realized, since the S'ruti says "One only, without a second" and "Without interior or exterior" (2.5.19 and 3.8.8). Nor do we deny the validity, for the ignorant, of actions with their factors and results as long as the relative world of name and form is considered as real. Therefore the standpoint depends on knowledge or ignorance and there is no contradiction between the two.

Br.up.4.3.34.S.B - - - tasmaat samprasaadasthaanam - - -

The state of deep sleep is taken as the example for describing liberation in the upanishads.

Br.up.4.3.20.S.B - - - tasmaat na aatmadharmo avidyaa - - - - - - - - moksha upapadyate.

Therefore nescience is not a natural characteristic of the Self, for what is natural to a thing can never be removed from it, like the heat and light of the sun. Liberation from ignorance is therefore possible.

Br.up.4.4.6.S.B - - - na hi vastutaH - - - - - - - upapadyate eva.

In reality, there is no distinction like bondage and liberation in the Self, because it is always the same; but the ignorance covering it is removed by the knowledge arising from the teachings of the scriptures.

Br.up.4.4.6.S.B - - - sarvadaa samaikarasam - vijnaanaphalamapekshya.

We hold that it is the definite conclusion of all the upanishads that we are nothing but the aatmaa, the Brahman that is always the same, homogeneous, one without a second, unchanging, birthless, undecaying, immortal, and free from all fear. Therefore the statement "He is merged in Brahman" is a figurative one, meaning the cessation, as a result of knowledge, of the continuous chain of births and deaths for one who was considering himself (out of ignorance) to be other than Brahman.

Br.up.4.4.7.S.B - - - ataH mokshaH na des'aantaragamanam - - - - iti uktam.

Therefore liberation does not mean going to another place (or world). The organs of a realized person do not go anywhere else, but they merge in their cause, just where they are. As has been said in Br.up. 3.2.12, only their names remain.

Br.up. 4.4.9.S.B - - - tasmaat ayameva mokshamaargaH - - - -

Therefore liberation is the absorption of the body and organs such as the eye in this very life, like the extinguishing of a lamp, when transmigration comes to an end because of the exhaustion of all desires.

Panchadas'i - 2.99 - - - Even after realization of the non - dual Reality, worldly dealings may continue as before, but no reality would be attached to them. The enlightened man will continue to see the world like every one else; but he will not be affected by anything that happens, knowing that joys and sorrows are only for the body - mind complex and not for the Self. See also 4.40.

B.S.1.1.4.S.B - - - tatra kinchit pariNaaminityam syat - - - - - kaalatrayam nopaavartete.

Eternality is of two kinds, known as pariNaaminityam and kooTasthanityam. The first is what continues to be recognized as the same, though undergoing changes, e.g. earth, etc, for those who hold the universe to be eternal, or the guNas for the Saankhyas. The second category is what never changes. Brahman is eternal in this sense.

B.S.1.1.4.S.B - - - avidyaakalpitabhedanivr.ttitvaat s'aastrasya.

The purpose of the scriptures is only to remove the notion of difference(duality) caused by nescience.

B.S.1.1.4.S.B - - - nityas'uddhabrahmasvaroopatvaat mokshasya.

Liberation is of the nature of Brahman which is eternally pure.

Liberation is not the result of action (karma).

B.S.1.1.4.S.B - - - ato anyanmoksham prati - - - - - - - - na upapadyate.

Apart from these (four), nobody can show any other mode by which liberation can be said to result from action. Accordingly, there is not the slightest possibility of any action being the cause of liberation.

Explanation: - The results of all actions fall under one or other of the following four categories -- production, attainment (or acquisition), transformation and purification. Brahman, being eternal, is not something to be produced. Being all - pervading and one's own real nature, it is not something to be attained or acquired. Being ever the same, it is not the transformation of something else, as curd is of milk. Being ever pure, it is not to be got by purification of something else, as gold is obtained by purification of ore. Non - realization of Brahman being due only to ignorance, knowledge alone can lead to its realization.

V.C. verse 2 - Commentary of H.H.Chandrasekhara Bharati Svami --

tena saalokya - saamiipya - saaruupya - saayujyaanaam mukhyamuktitvaabhaavaH suuchitaH bhavati.

These four -- saalokya, etc, are not of the nature of liberation in the principal sense. Since they relate only to saguNa Brahman, they are to be considered only as mithyaa or illusory.

Jiivanmukti - - - liberation even while living.

Br.up.4.4.6.S.B - - - tasmaat iha eva brahma eva - - - - - - - - - na s'ariirapaatottarakaalam

Therefore, being always Brahman, he is merged in Brahman, in this very life, not after the fall of the body.

Jiivanmukti is also spoken of in B.G.S.B -- 2.51, 5.24, 6.27 and 18.25 - - - Liberation consists in remaining identified with the changeless Self even while living in the present body. Liberation is not something to be attained after death.

Br.up.4.4.6 -- na tasya praaNaa utkraamanti - - - - brahmaapyeti.

The organs of the realized person do not depart (to take up another body). Being already Brahman, he merges in Brahman.

Br.up.3.2.11.S.B -- neti hovaacha yaajnavalkyo - - - - - uurmaya iva samudre.

The organs and objects do not depart, but attain identity with, or merge, in him only, their cause, the man of realization, who is the Supreme Brahman, like waves in the ocean.

The characteristics of the jiivanmukta .

Vedaanta saara -- Chapter 6.

Jiivanmukto nama - - - - A person liberated - in - life is one who, by the realization of the Absolute Brahman, his own Self, has dispelled the ignorance regarding It and who is free from all bondage and is established in Brahman, because of the destruction of ignorance and all its effects . See also muND. Up. 2.2.8. When he is not in samaadhi he experiences sense - objects as well as hunger, thirst, etc, but does not consider them to be real and is therefore not at all affected by them. He is like a man witnessing a magical performance, being fully aware that what he sees is not real.

"He who does not see anything in the waking state as in sound sleep; who, though seeing duality, does not really see it as he sees only the Absolute; who, though engaged in action (for the good of the world),is in reality inactive (being totally free from the idea of agency); he, and none other, is the knower of the Self. This is the truth." (S'ankara's upades'asaahasrii,5).

"Such qualities as freedom from hatred are natural to one who has attained Self - knowledge. They have not to be cultivated with effort (as in the case of an aspirant for liberation)" - - - naishkarmyasiddhi,4.69.

Videhamukti

A jiivanmukta (one who is liberated in life) continues to live till the praarabdhakarma which gave rise to the present body is exhausted. Then his body falls and he attains videhamukti or Absolute oneness, from which there is no return (see S'rii S'ankara's Vaakya vr.tti - verses 52,53).

"His sense - organs do not depart elsewhere (for taking up another body)" -- Br.up.4.4.6.

"They (the sense - organs) are absorbed in him" -- Br.up.3.2.11.

"Already liberated, he is freed (from further birth)" - KaTha up. 2.2.1.

Ch.up.6.14.2.S.B -- For a person who has already become a jiivanmukta the delay (in attaining videhamukti) is only till the body falls after the enjoyment of the fruits of action due to which it was born.

KaTha up. 2.3.15.S.B -- By declaring "He attains Brahman here" (2.3.14), it has been shown that there is no going to any other world for an enlightened man for whom all the knots of ignorance have been destroyed on the realization of the identity of the self with the all - pervading and absolutely attributeless Brahman, and who becomes Brahman even while living, as also asserted by another text: "His organs do not depart. Being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman" - Br.up.4.4.6.

Kramamukti (Liberation by stages).

It has been said earlier that a person who realizes his identity with Brahman becomes liberated even while living (jiivanmukta). Such a person becomes a videhamukta when his body falls on the exhaustion of his praarabdhakarma. There is another kind of liberation known as kramamukti or liberation by stages. Those who meditate on Om go to Brahmaloka and attain liberation there. Others who meditate on Brahman without the use of symbols also go to Brahmaloka by the path of the gods and attain liberation there (B.S.4.3.15.S.B). Those who meditate with the help of symbols do not go to Brahmaloka. In the meditations based on symbols, the meditations are not fixed on Brahman, the symbols being the chief object and so the meditator does not attain Brahmaloka (B.S.4.3.16). Meditation on a linga as S'iva or on a saalagraama as Vishnu are examples of meditation based on symbols. So also are the meditations such as "Meditate on the mind as Brahman" (Ch.up.3.18.1), "Meditate on the sun as Brahman" (Ch.up.3.19.1). Such meditators attain other results, but not liberation.

B.S.4.3.10.S.B - - - kaaryabrahmalokapralayapratyupasthaane sati - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - sambhavatiityupapaaditam.

When the time for the final dissolution of the world of the conditioned Brahman is imminent, those who are in that world and have acquired full realization there attain liberation along with hiraNyagarbha. Such a liberation by stages has to be admitted on the strength of the upanishadic texts.

25. Path of the Manes and Path of the Gods

Ch.up.S.B.Introduction - - - samastam karmaadhigatam - chandralokapratipattikaaraNam.
All the rituals performed along with meditation on praaNa and other deities become the means of reaching Brahmaloka (the world of hiraNyagarbha) through the path of the gods (devayaana) . Rituals alone (without meditation) are the means of attaining the Lunar region through the path of the manes (pitr.yaana).

These paths are elaborated below.

Ch.up.5.1.1.S.B - - - saguNabrahmavidyayaa uttaraa gatiH uktaa. - vaktavyaa iti aarabhyate.

It has been said that meditation on the conditioned Brahman leads to the path of the gods. Now, in this fifth chapter, after reiterating that same path for the householder who knows the panchaagni vidyaa (meditation on the five fires), and the celibates who are possessed of faith and perform other forms of meditation, the path of transmigration (or the path of the manes) characterised by smoke, etc, for those who perform rites alone (without meditation) is described in order to generate a spirit of detachment (vairaagya).

The path of the gods (devayaana or the northern path) is described in Ch.up.5.10.1 as well as in Br.up. 6.2.15. Some other upanishads also describe this path with some variations. Taking all these descriptions together, the complete enumeration of the stages of the path of the gods is as follows: First the deity of fire, then the deity of the day, the deity of the bright fortnight, the deity of the six months when the sun travels northward, the deity of the year, the deity of the world of gods, the deity of the air, the sun, the moon, the deity of lightning, the world of Varuna, the world of Indra, the world of Prajapati, and finally Brahmaloka. (B.S.4.3.3). In B.S. 4.3.4 it is made clear that the terms fire, bright fortnight, year, etc, refer to the deities identified with these. That deities are meant here, and not marks or places of enjoyment, is indicated by the text of the Chhandogya upanishad, which says -- "From the moon to the lightning. Then a superhuman being leads them to Brahman" - (Ch. up. 4.15.5, 5.10.1). In B.S. 4.3.7 it is asserted that these meditators go to the Saguna Brahman, for no journey is possible to Nirguna Brahman which is all - pervading. This path is also known as the path of light or archiraadimaarga.

The path of the manes (pitr.yaana or the southern path) is described in Ch.up. 5.10.3 and 4. Householders who perform Vedic rites such as agnihotra and activities for public welfare such as construction of tanks, wells and rest - houses and practise charity (these are known as ishTa, puurta and dattam) go through the path of the manes. The stages in this path are the deity of smoke, the deity of the night, the deity of the dark fortnight, the deity of the six months during which the sun travels southward, the region of the manes, aakaas'a and the moon. This moon is King Soma. Reaching there, they become identified with this moon and enjoy there. They are also in turn enjoyed by the gods. Enjoyment is possible only with a body. Therefore the jiiva who reaches this moon by this path gets a body produced out of the water particles and smoke rising out of his dead body, which was his last offering on the earth into fire. The water, together with the smoke, arising out of the cremated body envelops the jiiva and goes to the region of the moon and produces a body for enjoyment. The enjoyment of the jiivas here consists

in the companionship of the gods, who in turn enjoy them by being served by them.

Those who go by the path of the manes have to return on the exhaustion of the results of the rites and other good deeds performed by them, which earned them this path. This is described in Ch.up. 5.10.5 and 6. The aqueous body which the jiiva had in the region of the moon takes a subtle form like aakaas'a and remains in the sky. Then it successively appears as air, smoke, white cloud and rain - bearing cloud and then falls down in the form of rain. Then these jiivas come down to this world by remaining attached to rice, barley, herbs and trees, sesamum plants, beans, etc. There is no certainty where the rainwater will fall and where the jiivas attached to the grains etc, will go. When the rice, etc is eaten by a male capable of reproduction, the jiiva attached to it may enter the womb of a female and be born as a human being, animal, bird, or any other creature. This process and the difficulties in the way are described in detail in the Bhaashya. The nature of the birth is determined by the residual karma (See KaTh.up.2.2.7).

These two paths are also mentioned in B.G.8.24 and 25.

26. Transmigration

Death is the departure of the subtle body from the gross body. The gross body gets sentiency only because of the reflection of Consciousness in the subtle body. When the subtle body departs the gross body becomes insentient. The subtle body takes up another gross body. This process goes on until the dawn of Self - knowledge. Then, on the fall of the gross body when the praarabdhakarma is exhausted, the subtle body also ceases to exist and videhamukti is attained.

Br.up.4.3.35.S.B - - - itaH aarabhya asya samsaaraH varNyate - - - - - ityaaha atra dr.shTaantam.

From here onwards transmigration of the self is being described. An example is given to show how the self passes from the present body to the next, in the same way as the self goes from the dream to the waking state.

tat tatra yathaa loke - - - - - - - ityaaha kaaruNyaat s'rutiH.

Just as a cart, heavily loaded with various articles, moves rumbling under the load, so does the self that is in the body, i.e. the self that has the subtle body as its limiting adjunct, move between this and the next world, as between the waking and dream states, through birth and death, consisting respectively in the association with and dissociation from the (gross) body. It should be noted here that, when the subtle body, which has the vital force as its chief

constituent, and which is illumined by the self - luminous aatman, goes, the self, of which it is the limiting adjunct, also seems to go. This happens when breathing becomes difficult, when the person is gasping for breath. Although this is an occurrence that is commonly observed, the upanishad mentions it only to stimulate a spirit of renunciation in us. Since at the time of death a man is in a helpless state of mind and cannot adopt the means for attaining the final goal of life, he must practise the means earlier, when he is in a position to do so. This is what the s'ruti indicates out of compassion.

Br.up.4.3.36.S.B - - - tasmaat rasaat - - - - - - - - - karma s'rutaadivas'aat aadravati.

Just as a fruit is detached from its stalk by the wind or by various other causes, so does this infinite being, the self identified with the subtle body, i.e. the self with the subtle body as the limiting adjunct, completely detach itself from all the parts of the gross body, such as the eye,etc. The word 'completely' indicates that the vital force does not remain in the body as in the state of deep sleep. The self withdraws the subtle body, including the vital force (praaNa) and departs again. The use of the word 'again' is to indicate that this subtle body has similarly gone from one gross body to another many times before, just as it has moved frequently between the dream and waking states. It goes to the particular gross body determined by the past work, knowledge, etc.

Br.up.4.3.37.S.B - - - - - tatra asya idam s'ariiram parityajya - - - - - - - - iti lokaprasiddho dr.shTaantaH uchyate.

Now a question may arise - - - - When the jiiva goes leaving one gross body, he has no power to take another by himself. Nor are there others who, like servants, would wait for him with another body made ready, as a king's retinue waits for him with a house kept ready. How then can the jiiva get another body? The answer is: He has adopted the whole universe as his means for the realization of the results of his actions. Therefore the whole universe, impelled by his work, waits for him with the requisite means for the realization of the results of his actions. The S'atapatha Brahmana says - "A man is born into the body that has been made for him" (VI.II.ii.27). This process is illustrated by two examples in 4.3.37 and 4.3.38. These examples are narrated below.

Br.up.4.3.37.S.B - - - - - tat tatra yathaa raajaanam - - - - - - - - - tathaa idam aagachchhati ityevameva cha kr.tvaa pratiikshante ityarthaH.

Just as, when a king visits some place within his kingdom the leading citizens of that place, as well as certain others appointed by the king to perform specific duties, wait for him with food and drink and a palace kept ready for

his stay, similarly, for the transmigrating self who is about to take up a new body, the elements that are necessary for the creation of that body, as well as the presiding deities of the organs, such as Indra and others, wait with the means of enjoyment of the results of his past actions, saying "Here comes Brahman, our enjoyer and master".

Br.up.4.3.38.S.B - - - - tameva jigamishum - - - - - maraNakaale sarve praaNaa vaagaadaya abhisamaayanti. Just as when the king wishes to go back, the leading citizens and others who had received him approach him in a body, unbidden by the king, and simply knowing that he wishes to go, so do all the organs approach the departing jiiva at the time of death.

Br.up.4.4.1.S.B - - - It has been said in 4.3.36 - "This infinite being, completely detaching himself from the parts of the body" -- In order to explain when and how that detachment takes place, the process of transmigration is described in detail in this section - - - Sa ayam aatmaa sammuuDha ayamiti - - - When the self becomes weak - - - really it is the body that becomes weak, but its weakness is figuratively spoken of as that of the self. The state of helplessness at the time of death, which is caused by the withdrawal of the organs, is attributed by the ordinary man to the self. At this time the organs, such as that of speech, come to the self. Then this self that is in the body is detached from the parts of the body. How does this detachment take place and how do the organs come to the self? This is being explained: Completely withdrawing these particles of light, i.e. the organs, such as the eye, so called because they reveal colour etc. The word 'completely ' shows the distinction of this state from sleep, in which they are just drawn in, but not absolutely, as in this case. The self then comes to the heart, i.e. the ether in the lotus of the heart; in other words, the consciousness is manifested in the heart. The self cannot, by itself, move or withdraw the activities of the organs. It is through the limiting adjuncts, such as the intellect, that all changes and activities are attributed to the self. When does it withdraw the particles of light? The answer is: the presiding deity of the eye, who is an aspect of the sun, being directed by the individual's past actions, goes on helping the functioning of the eye, but withdraws this help and becomes merged in the sun when the person is about to die. Br.up.3.2.13 says that the vocal organ merges in fire, the vital force in air, the eye in the sun, and so on, at the time of death. These organs again take up their respective places when the individual takes another body.

Br.up.4.4.2.S.B - - - ekiibhavati karaNajaatam svena lingaatmanaa.

Every organ becomes united with the subtle body of the dying man.

Br.up.4.4.2.S.B -- tadaa upalakshyate devataanivr.ttiH karaNaanaam cha - - - - - - - nishkraamati.

This means that at the time of death the presiding deities cease to help the organs and the organs become united with the subtle body with its seat in the heart. The top of the heart, i.e. the nerve - end, which is the exit for the self, brightens. Through that top, brightened by the light of the self, the jiiva, with the subtle body as its limiting adjunct, departs. (This departure of the subtle body is what is known as death).

Br.up.4.4.2.S.B -- tatra cha aatmachaitanyajyotiH - - - - - - - - - - - gamanam iha vivakshitam.

In the subtle body the self - effulgent consciousness of the self is always particularly manifest. It is because of this limiting adjunct that the self appears to have birth, death and all activities. As the self (with the subtle body as limiting adjunct) departs, by which way does it leave the body? Through the eye, if the individual has a store of work or knowledge that would take it to the sun, or through the head, if the individual is entitled to go to the world of hiraNyagarbha, or through any other part of the body, according to his past work and knowledge. When the individual self is about to depart to the next world, the vital force follows; and when the vital force departs, all the organs, such as that of speech, follow.

Br.up.4.4.2.S.B -- karmaNaa tadbhaavyamaanena - - - - - - - vijnaanodbhaasitam eva ityarthaH.

Everyone gets, at the moment of death, a consciousness of his next life and goes to the body revealed by that particular consciousness.

The phenomenon of child prodigies explained

Br.up.4.4.2.S.B - - - s'akaTavat sambhr.tasambhaara - - - - - -

It has been said that the departing self goes like a loaded cart, making noises. Now, as it leaves for the next world, what is its food on the way and for consumption after reaching that world, and what are the materials for making the new body and organs? The answer is: the self, journeying to the next world, is accompanied by all the knowledge acquired, the result of all actions (karma) and the impressions of past actions. These impressions are the cause of the initiation of fresh actions and the bringing to fruition of past actions. When the organs are prompted to work by the impressions of past actions, they can easily attain skill in certain spheres even without any practice in the present life. It is observed that some persons are skillful in certain activities, such as painting, from their very birth, even without any training in the present life (child prodigies). This is due to skill attained in past lives. Similarly, in the enjoyment of sense objects also, some are found to be skillful by nature and others are not. Hence it is said that these three --

knowledge, work and past experience -- are the food on the way to the next world (or next life) and after reaching there (i.e. taking a new body). Therefore one should cultivate only the good forms of these three so that one may get a desirable body and desirable enjoyments.

How the jiiva takes a new body

Br.up.4.4.3.S.B - - - evam vidyaadisambhaarasambhr.taH - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - puurvaas'rayam vimunchati ityetasmin arthe dr.shTaantaH upaadiiyate.

Now the question is, when the self loaded with knowledge, etc, is about to take up another body, does it leave the old body and go to another, like a bird going to another tree? Or is it carried by another body serving as a vehicle to the place where, according to its past work, it is to be born? Or does it stay here, while its organs become all - pervading and function as such? Or do the organs remain contracted within the limits of the body as long as the jiiva remains in that particular body, but when the jiiva departs the organs become all - pervading, like the light of a lamp when its enclosure is removed and contract again when a new body is taken up? (These are the views, respectively, of the Jains, the Devataavaadins, the Saankhyas and Vedanta). The answer is: Though the organs are by nature all - pervading and infinite (in their form as the presiding deities), since the new body is made in accordance with the person's work, knowledge and past impressions, the functions of the organs also contract or expand accordingly. Therefore the impressions called past experience, under the control of the person's knowledge and work, stretch out, like a leach, from the body, retaining their seat in the heart, as in the dream state, and build another body in accordance with his past work; they leave their seat, the old body, when a new body is made ready. An illustration on this point is given in 4.4.3.

Br.up.4.4.3.S.B - - - tat tatra dehaantarasanchaare - - - - - - - - - esha dehaantaraarambhavidhiH.

The following example illustrates how the jiiva passes from one gross body to another. Just as a leach, which wants to go from one leaf to another, stretches the front part of its body and takes hold of the new leaf and then draws the hind portion of the body away from the old leaf and onto the new leaf, so also, the jiiva takes hold of the new body and only thereafter leaves the old body. This is similar to what happens when going from the waking to the dream state. In the dream state the person identifies himself with his dream body and completely dissociates himself from his waking state body. The presiding deities of all the organs also take their places in the new body. The nature of the new body, whether it is that of a human being or of a god, or of an animal or other creature, depends on the past karma, knowledge and

impressions (vaasanas) of the particular individual. The MuND. Up. says - - "He who longs for objects of desire, thinking highly of them, is born along with those desires in a situation in which he will be able to realize those desires"(3.2.2). Desire is therefore the cause of repeated births and deaths. Total elimination of desire is the means to liberation.

Regarding how a new body is formed, the example of a goldsmith taking an old ornament and converting it into a new one is given in Br.up.4.4.4.

Br.up.3.2.13.S.B - - - karma eva aas'rayam - - - - - - - -

Karma is the cause of repeated births.

KaTha up. 2.2.7 -- The jiiva is born according to his karma and knowledge as a human being, animal, bird, tree, etc.

Proof of existence of past births

Ch.up.6.11.3.S.B - - - jiivaapetam - - - - - - na jiivo mriyate iti.

When separated from the jiiva (soul), the (gross) body dies, but the soul does not die. From the fact that as soon as a creature is born, it hankers after breast - feeding and experiences fear, etc, it is clear that it has memory of similar experiences in past lives. Moreover, since rites like agnihotra have some purpose to serve, it follows that the soul does not die.

27. Om - Symbol and Name of Brahman

Br.up.5.1.1.S.B - - - yadyapi brahma - aatmaadis'abdaa brahmaNaH - - - - - - Although the words 'Brahman', 'Atman', etc, are names of Brahman, we understand from the upanishads that Om is Brahman's most intimate appellation. Therefore it is the best means for the realization of Brahman. It is so in two ways -- as the symbol of Brahman and also as Its name. Just as the image of Vishnu or any other god is looked upon as the god himself and worshipped, so also, Om is to be looked upon as Brahman. Brahman is pleased with one who uses Om as an aid, because the upanishad says -- "This is the best help and the highest". (KaTha up. 1.2.17). (See also Pras'na up.5.2 , MuND. Up. 2.2.6).

Br.up.5.1.1.S.B -- katham omkaaraH brahmanaH pratiikatvena - - - - - - - - - saadhanatvena pratipattavya iti.

Om is declared to be a symbol of Brahman by the statement 'Om is the ether - Brahman (om kham brahma)'. Now Om is being praised as the Veda, for the entire Vedas are but Om. They all issue out of it and consist of it. Another

reason why Om is the Veda is that through it one knows whatever is to be known. Therefore, Om being so important, it should be used as the means to Self - realization.

taitt.up.1.8.S.B -- paraaparabrahmadr.shtyaa upaasyamaana - - - - - pratimeva vishNoH.

Though Om is a mere word, it becomes a means for the attainment of the supreme Brahman or of hiraNyagarbha, depending on the idea with which it is meditated on. Just as an image is a symbol of Vishnu, Om is a symbol for the conditioned as well as the unconditioned (apara and para) Brahman.

Ch.up.2.23.2.S.B -- prajaapatiH viraaT kas'yapo vaa - - - - - vyaahr.tayaH.

Prajaapati meditated with regard to the worlds, in order to get their essence. Then the three Vedas flashed in his mind as the essence of the three worlds. He meditated further on the three Vedas and got as their essence the three vyaahr.tis, bhuuH, bhuvaH, svaH.

Ch.up.2.23.3.S.B - - - taani aksharaaNi - - - - - - omkaaraH sampraasravat tat brahma.

He meditated with regard to the three vyaahr.tis and got as their essence Om. That Om is Brahman. (Thus Om is the essence of all the worlds).

Ch.up.2.23.3. tadyathaa s'ankunaa - - - - - eva idam sarvam.

Just as all leaves are permeated by the ribs of the leaves, so are all words (speech) permeated by Om. Verily, Om is all this.

MuND. up. 2.2.4 says -- Om is the bow, the soul is the arrow and Brahman is the target.

The MaaNDuukya upanishad deals elaborately with Om.

References to Om are found in S'rii S'ankara's Bhaashya on Bhagavad - gita ch.7.8, ch.8.13, ch.9.17 and ch.17.23,24.

Patanjali's Yoga suutra I.27 says that Om is the name of iisvara.

28. Mahaavaakyas

Statements in the upanishads declaring the identity of the jiiva and Brahman are known as Mahaavaakyas. S'rii S'ankara says in Viveka chuuDaamaNi, verse 251 that there are a hundred (i.e. innumerable) such statements in the

s'ruti. Out of these, four statements from the four Vedas are well known. They are: -

prajnaanam Brahma - Ait.up. 3.13 - - - R.g Veda,

aham brahma asmi - Br.up.1.4.10 -- Yajur Veda,
tat tvam asi - Ch.up. 6.8.7 -- Saama veda,

ayam aatmaa brahma - MaaND.up. 2.

The meaning of tat tvam asi

V.C. - Commentary of S'rii Jagadguru Chandras'ekhara Bhaarati on verses 243 to 251 --

The word tat stands for Brahman as qualified by the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution (i.e.iis'vara). The word tvam stands for the aatmaa as qualified by the mental states of waking, dream and deep sleep (i.e.jiiva). These two are of mutually opposed qualities, like the glow - worm and the sun, like the servant and the king, like the well and the ocean and like the atom and the earth (verse 244). There can be no identity between these two, which are the literal meanings (vaachyaartha) of the words tat and tvam. The identity is only between their implied meanings (lakshyaartha). The opposition between the literal meanings is due to the upadhis, since the literal meaning of tat is Brahman with the upadhi or limiting adjunct of maayaa and the literal meaning of tvam is aatmaa with the limiting adjunct of the five sheaths. When these limiting adjuncts, which are not real, are effectively removed, there is neither iis'vara nor jiiva. The two terms tat and tvam (That and Thou) are to be understood properly by their implied meanings in order to grasp the import of the absolute identity between them. This is to be done neither by total rejection of their literal meaning nor by total non - rejection, but by a combination of both.

Implied meanings are of three kinds -- jahallakshaNaa, ajahal - lakshaNaa and jahadajahallakshaNaa.

jahallakshaNaa - The literal meaning is to be rejected and some other meaning consistent with it is to be adopted. An example is -- gangaayaam ghoshaH, the literal meaning of which is -- a hamlet on the river Ganga. Since there cannot be a hamlet on the river itself, it is the bank of the river that is meant. Here the literal meaning of the word 'Ganga' has to be given up completely and the implied meaning 'bank' has to be adopted.

ajahallakshaNaa - Without giving up the literal meaning of the word, what is implied by it is also adopted to get the meaning intended to be conveyed. An

example is -- "The red is running", which is intended to convey that the red horse is running. Here the literal meaning of the word 'red' is retained and the implied word 'horse' is added to get the correct sense of the sentence.

jahadajahallakshaNaa - Here a part of the literal meaning is retained and the other part discarded. The sentence "This is that Devadatta" is interpreted by using this lakshaNaa. The meaning intended to be conveyed by this sentence is that Devadatta who is seen at the present time in this place is the same as the person who was seen earlier in another place. The literal meaning of the word 'this' is Devadatta associated with the present time and place. The literal meaning of the word 'that' is Devadatta associated with the past time and some other place. Since this sentence purports to convey the identity of the person seen in different places at different times, we get this meaning by discarding the reference to the place and time conveyed by the words 'this' and 'that' and retaining the reference to Devadatta. This is also known as bhaagatyaaga - lakshaNaa. The meaning of the sentence tat tvam asi is obtained by using this method. Just as in the sentence "This is Devadatta" the identity is stated by rejecting the contradictory qualities, so also in the sentence "That thou art" the contradictory qualities (namely, the limiting adjuncts) are rejected. Thus it follows that the jiiva and Brahman are in essence one when the limiting adjuncts, maayaa and the five sheaths, are rejected.

The above view, that jahadajahallakshaNaa is to be applied for getting the meaning of this Mahaavaakya, is the traditional and the most widely accepted view. But the author of Vedaanta Paribhaashaa says, after stating this view, that according to him it is not necessary to resort to implication (lakshaNaa) at all (Chapter IV - Verbal testimony).

In Samkshepas'aariirakam, I.169, the adoption of jahallakshaNaa is mentioned as a possible alternative, but the author has given an indication in this verse itself that he is not quite in favour of it.

How knowledge arises from the Mahaavaakya -- two theories.

According to one theory, known as the prasankhyaana theory, attributed to MaNDana Mis'ra, the knowledge which arises from the Mahaavaakya is relational and mediate, like any other knowledge arising from a sentence. Such a knowledge cannot apprehend Brahman which is non - relational (asamsr.shta) and immediate (aparoksha). Meditation (prasankhyaana) gives rise to another knowledge which is non - relational and immediate. It is this knowledge that destroys nescience.

The view of Sures'vara is the opposite of the above. Knowledge of Brahman arises directly from the Mahaavaakyas. According to him also, meditation is

necessary, but it is only for perfecting the hearing. The difference between the two theories is that, while, according to Sures'vara, the knowledge which arises from the Mahaavaakya is immediate and non - relational, according to the other theory this knowledge is only mediate and relational. For an elaborate discussion Sures'vara's Naishkarmyasiddhi may be referred to.

Following the view of MaNDana, Vaachaspati Mis'ra holds that the mind is the instrument for the attainment of Self - knowledge. Following the other view stated above, Prakaas'aatman, the author of VivaraNa says that the Mahaavaakya itself is the instrument, though the knowledge no doubt arises in the mind.

The Mahaavaakya gives rise to Self - knowledge by making the mind take the form of Brahman. The question arises - - since Brahman has no form, what is meant by saying that the mind takes the form of Brahman (akhaNDaakaaravr.tti)? This is explained by Vidyaranya in Jivanmuktiviveka, chapter 3 by taking an example. A pot made of clay is full of the all - pervading space as soon as it is made. Filling it afterwards with water, rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc, in the pot can be removed, the space inside can never be removed. It continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot is hermetically sealed. In the same manner, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the consciousness of the self. It takes on, after its birth, due to the influence of virtue and vice, the form of pots, cloths, colour, taste, pleasure, pain, and other transformations, just like melted copper, cast into moulds. Of these, the transformations such as colour, taste and the like, which are not - self, can be removed from the mind, but the form of the self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed at all. Thus, when all other ideas are removed from the mind, the self is realized without any impediment. It has been said - "One should cause the mind which, by its very nature, is ever prone to assume either of the two forms of the Self and the not - Self, to throw into the background the perception of the not - Self, by taking on the form of the Self alone". And also -- "The mind takes on the form of pleasure, pain and the like, because of the influence of virtue and vice, whereas the form of the mind, in its native aspect, is not conditioned by any extraneous cause. To the mind devoid of all transformations is revealed the supreme Bliss". Thus, when the mind is emptied of all other thoughts Self - knowledge arises.

The meaning of the Mahaavaakya 'aham brahma asmi'

This Mahaavaakya is explained by Sures'vara in Naishkarmyasiddhi, 2.29 thus: - - Just as in the sentence, "This post is a man", the earlier cognition that there is a post is sublated by the subsequent cognition that it is a man (and not a post), the cognition "I am Brahman" removes entirely the cognition as "I". Sures'vara explains the statement aham brahma asmi, (I am

Brahman), through what is known as baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaraNyam. In a sentence in Sanskrit, words which, having the same case - endings, denote one and the same thing are said to be in samaanaadhikaraNam. The relation between the words is called saamaanaadhikaraNyam. This relation is of two kinds, mukhya saamaanaadhikaraNyam and baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaraNyam. In the former, the objects denoted by the words will have the same ontological status (or the same order of reality). For example, in the sentence, the pot - space is but the great (outer) space, the space within the pot and the great space are both empirically real (vyaavahaarika satya). The difference between them is only due to the upaadhi in the form of the pot. When the upaadhi is removed, they become one, which they really are, even earlier. But if the words of a sentence, having the same case - endings, denote objects which have different ontological status, and if they purport to convey only one idea, they are in baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaraNyam. For example, in the statement "This post is a man", the words "post" and "man" have different ontological status. Since what exists is a man and not a post, "man" is empirically real (vyaavahaarika) and "post" is only apparently real (praatibhaasika). Thus, just as the idea that what is seen is a post is removed when the person hears the statement "This post is a man", the wrong cognition of the form 'I am a man', 'I am happy' etc, is removed when a person realises that he is Brahman on hearing the statement aham brahma asmi.

The same explanation of this Mahaavaakya is given also in Panchadas'i, 8.43.

The statement sarvam khalu idam brahma (Ch.up.3.14.1) -- All this is only Brahman -- is also explained through baadhaayaam saamaanaadhikaraNyam in B.S. 1.3.1. S.B - - sarvam brahmeti tu saamaanaadhikaraNyam prapanchavilaapanaartham - - - - - - - - iti ekarasataas'ravaNaat - - - - - The use of the words 'all' and 'Brahman' in apposition in the text 'All this is but Brahman' is intended to eliminate the conception of the universe (as a reality) and not for establishing heterogeneity (in Brahman). For we hear of homogeneity in ' As a lump of salt is without interior or exterior, entire and purely saline in taste, even so is the Self without interior or exterior, entire and pure consciousness alone' (Br.up..4.5.13).

29. Means to Self - Realization

Br. up. 2.4.5. S.B - - - tasmaat aatmaa vai are drashtavyaH dars'anaarhaH - - - - - - - - - - - - - - na anyathaa s'ravaNamaatreNa.

Therefore, the Self should be realized, i.e. is worthy of realization or, should be made the object of realization. It should first be heard about from a teacher

and from the scriptures, then reflected on through reasoning and then steadfastly meditated upon. It is only thus that It is realized -- when these means, namely, hearing, reflection and meditation have been gone through. It is only when these three are combined that true realization of the oneness of Brahman is attained, not otherwise, by hearing alone.

The meaning of the terms 'hearing', 'reflection' and 'meditation' -- s'ravaNam, mananam and nididhyaasanam.

Vedaanta saara,ch.5, para 182 -- Hearing is the determination, by the application of the six characteristic signs, that the purport of the entire Vedanta is the non - dual Brahman. The six signs are -- (1)the beginning and the conclusion, (2)repetition, (3)originality, (4)result, (5)eulogy and (6)demonstration. The Sanskrit terms for these are, respectively, upakramopasamhaara, abhyaasa, apuurvataa, phala, arthavaada, upapatti. Each of these terms is explained below.

Vedaanta saara,ch.5. para 185 -- The term ' the beginning and the conclusion' means the presentation of the subject matter of a section at the beginning and at the end of the section. For example, in the sixth chapter of the Chhaandogya Upanishad, Brahman, which is the subject - matter of the chapter, is introduced at the beginning with the words, "One only without a second", etc. (6.2.1). At the end of the chapter Brahman is again spoken of in the words, "In It all that exists has its Self",etc. (6.8.7).

Para 186 -- Repetition is the repeated presentation of the subject - matter in the section. In the same chapter, Brahman, the One without a second, is mentioned nine times by the sentence "Thou art that".

Para 187 -- 'Originality' means that the subject - matter of the section is not known through any other source of knowledge. For instance, the subject matter of the above section, namely, Brahman, cannot be known through any source of knowledge other than the s'ruti.

Para 188 -- The 'result' is the utility of the subject - matter. For example, in the same section, we find the sentences" One who has a teacher realizes Brahman. He has to wait only as long as he is not freed from the body; then he is united with Brahman". (6.14.2). Here the utility of the knowledge is attainment of Brahman.

Para 189 -- Eulogy is the praise of the subject - matter. The words in this section, "Did you ask for that instruction by which one knows what has not been known, etc" (6.1.3) are spoken in praise of Brahman.

Para 190 -- Demonstration is the reasoning in support of the subject - matter, adduced at different places in the same section. An example is -- "My dear, as by one lump of clay all that is made of clay is known, every modification being only a name, and being real only as clay" -- (6.4.1). This shows that the universe has no reality except as an apparent modification of Brahman, the only Reality.

Para 191 -- Reflection is the constant thinking of Brahman, the One without a second, already heard about from the teacher, by making use of arguments in a constructive manner.

Para 192 -- Meditation is keeping the mind fixed on the thought of Brahman, uninterrupted by any other thought.

The result achieved by 'hearing' etc.

'Hearing' removes the doubt whether the upanishadic text which is the pramaaNa purports to teach about Brahman or about some other entity. This doubt is known as pramaaNa - asambhaavanaa, or the doubt about the pramaaNa itself.

'Reflection' removes the doubt whether Brahman and the jiiva are identical or not. This doubt is called prameya - asambhaavanaa.

'Meditation' is intended to keep off wrong notions such as “The universe is real; the difference between Brahman and jiiva is real", which are contrary to the teachings of the upanishads, by developing concentration of the mind. Such wrong notions are known as vipariita - bhaavanaa.

Thus the purpose of hearing, reflection and meditation is the removal of obstacles in the form of doubts and wrong notions that stand in the way of the origination of Self - knowledge.

30. Four Preliminary Requisites [SaadhanachatushTayam]

In order that hearing, reflection and meditation may be fruitful, the aspirant should have acquired the four preliminary qualifications mentioned below.

B.S.1.1.1.S.B - - - tasmaat kimapi vaktavyam yadanantaram brahmajijnaasaa upadis'yate. - - - - - - - - - mumukshutvam cha.

The four requisites are -- (1) discrimination between the eternal and the non - eternal (nitya - anitya - vastu vivekaH), (2) detachment towards all enjoyments in this world as well as in higher worlds like heaven (iha - amutra - arthabhoga - viraagaH), (3) possession of the six virtues commencing with

control of the mind (s'amadamaadisaadhanasampat), and (4) yearning for liberation (mumukshutvam). Each of these is explained in VivekachuuDaamaNi as below.

V.C. Verse 20 - - - The firm conviction that Brahman alone is real and that the universe is illusory (mithyaa) is discrimination between the eternal and the non - eternal.

V.C. Verse21 - - - Detachment is revulsion towards all objects of enjoyment in this world as well as in higher worlds, including one's own body.

The six virtues starting with s'ama are - - - s'ama, dama, uparati, titikshaa, s'raddhaa, samaadhaana. These are explained below.

V.C. Verse 22 - - - Withdrawing the mind from all sense - pleasures by realizing their harmful nature, and making it rest on one's objective (namely, the Self),is s'ama.

V.C. Verse 23 - - - Restraining the organs of sense and of action (jnaanendriya and karmendriya) is known as dama.

V.C. Verse 24 - - - When the mind ceases to function through the external organs, that state is uparati.

V.C. Verse 25 - - - Enduring all adversities without lament or anxiety and without seeking to counter them is titikshaa.
V.C. Verse 26 - - - Firm conviction about the truth of the scriptures and the teachings of the Guru is s'raddhaa.

V.C. Verse 27 - - - The mind remaining firmly fixed in the attributeless Brahman is samaadhaana.

The fourth requisite, mumukshutvam is explained in V.C. verse 28 as the yearning to become free from nescience and its effect, bondage, by the realization of one's true nature. In the Bhaashya on Gita,4.11 S'rii S'ankara says that it is impossible for a person to be a seeker of liberation and also a seeker of the fruits of action at the same time. From this it is clear that only a person who has attained total and intense detachment can be called a mumukshu. The definition of yogaaruudha in Gita 6.4 as one who is free from attachment to sense - objects and actions and does not even think of them indicates that both these terms have the same meaning.

Of these, detachment and the yearning for liberation are the most important. Only if these two are strong, will the others like s'ama, etc, be fruitful -- Verse 30.

31. Scope of Reasoning (Tarka)

Reasoning, by itself, is not sufficient for attaining knowledge of Brahman, but reasoning which does not run counter to the upanishadic texts is useful as a help.

B.S. 1.1.1. S.B - - - tasmaat brahmajijnaasopanyaasamukhena - - - - - - - - - - - - prastuuyate.

Therefore, beginning with a statement of the desire to know Brahman, there is begun an enquiry for the ascertainment of the meaning of the Vedaanta texts, with the help of reasoning not inconsistent with those texts, the object being liberation (through knowledge).

B.S.1.1. 2.S.B - - - vaakyaarthavichaaraNaadhyavasaananirvr.ttaa - - - - - - - - dars'ayati.

The realization of Brahman results from the firm conviction arising out of deliberation on the upanishadic texts and their meaning, but not from other means of knowledge such as inference, etc. With regard, however, to the texts that speak of the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, even reasoning, not opposed to these texts, is not ruled out as a means of reinforcing the meaning of these texts. In fact, the upanishads themselves accept reasoning as an aid. For instance, it is said, "The Self is to be heard about, to be rflected on" (Br.up.2.4.5). And also the text, "A man, well - informed and intelligent, can reach the country of the Gandharas; similarly, a man who has a teacher attains knowledge" (Ch.up.6.14.2), shows that the texts rely on the aid of the human intellect also (i.e. they give importance to reasoning).

B.S.2.1.6.S.B - - - yadapi s'ravaNavyatirekeNa mananam vidadhat - - - - - - - - brahmaavyatirekaH ityevamjaatiiyakaH.

It was also claimed that by enjoining reflection over and above hearing, the Br. up. itself indicates that logic also is to be accepted. Though this is so, mere empty logic cannot be given a place here merely because of this; for, logic conforming to the upanishads is alone resorted to here as a subsidiary means to help realization. The logic that is acceptable is of the following nature. Since the states of sleep and wakefulness contradict each other, the Self is not identified with either of them; since the individual soul dissociates itself from the world in the state of deep sleep to become one with the Self which is Existence, it must be the same as the transcendental Self; since the universe has originated from Brahman and since the principle is that cause and effect are non - different, the universe must be non - different from Brahman; and so on. It is reasoning of this kind that has been used in

VivekachuuDaamaNi to conclude that none of the five sheaths can be the self (verse 156 onwards).

B.S.2.1.11.S.B - - - itas'cha na aagamagamye arthe kevalena tarkeNa - - - - - - - - - parasparavipratipattidars'anaat.

For this reason also one should not, on the strength of mere logic, propound something that has to be known only from the Vedas. Reasoning that has no foundation in the Veda and springs from the imagination of persons lacks conclusiveness. Man's conjecture has no limits. Thus it is seen that an argument put forward by one learned person is proved to be unsustainable by another learned person. That again is proved to be untenable by yet another person. The result is that no argument can be accepted as conclusive. It is well known that even great men like Kapila and kanada hold divergent views. (Therefore, only conclusions firmly based on the scriptures and supplemented by proper reasoning can stand scrutiny).

KaTha up. 1.2.9.S.B - - - ato ananyaprokta aatmani - - - -

This wisdom about the Self, as presented in the Vedas, that arises when instruction is given by one who has become identified with It, cannot be attained through mere argumentation, based merely on one's own intellect.

B.S.1.1.2 S.B - - - na dharmajijnaasaayaamiva s'rutyaadaya - brahmajnaanasya.

The scriptures, by themselves alone, are not the means for Self - knowledge. The scriptures have to be supplemented by reasoning and actual experience, unlike in the case of performance of rites, where the scriptures alone are the authority. In the case of rites there is no question of direct experience, since the result is to be attained only at some future time, whereas in the case of knowledge of Brahman actual experience is the culmination.

32. Two Kinds of Vision

Vision is of two kinds -- phenomenal and eternal. The former is a modification of the mind when it stretches out through the eyes. It is dependent on the objects perceived. It has a beginning and an end. But the latter is the very nature of the Self, just as heat and light are the very nature of the sun. The Self is said to be a seer, hearer, thinker, etc, only when it it is associated with the respective limiting adjuncts such as the eye, ear, mind, etc.

Br.up.3.4.2.S.B - - - dr.shtiH iti dvividhaa bhavati laukikii paaramaarthikii cha - - - - - - - vidyate iti cha.

Vision is of two kinds, phenomenal and real. Phenomenal vision is an action of the mind when connected with the eye. It is an act and has therefore a beginning and an end. But the vision that belongs to the Self is like the heat and light of fire, being the very essence of the witness; it has neither beginnig nor end. The ordinary or phenomenal vision, however, is coloured by the objects seen through the eye. It begins when the eye comes into contact with the object and ends when the contact ends. The eternal vision of the Self is only metaphorically spoken of as the witness. It is a witness only when it is looked upon as associated with the limiting adjuncts, namely, the mind, body, etc. By itself it is only pure consciousness and cannot be described even as a witness.

33. Process of Visual Perception

The process of visual perception, according to Advaita Vedanta, is described in chapter 1 of Vedaanta Paribhaashaa thus. Just as the water in a tank, issuing through a hole, enters, through a channel, a number of fields and assumes the shapes of those fields, so also the luminous mind, stretching out through the eye, goes to the space occupied by objects and becomes modified into the forms of those objects. Such a modification is called a vr.tti of the mind. The same fact is also stated in Panchadas'i, 4.27, 28 and 29, based on S'rii S'ankara's Upades'asaahasrii, Metrical portion, chapter 14, verses 3 & 4. The whole process of visual perception consists of the following steps:
(1) The mind stretches out through the eye, reaches the object and takes the form of the object. This is called a vr.tti or mode of the mind.

(2) The mental mode removes the veil of ignorance that hides the object.

(3) Consciousness underlying the object, being manifest through the mental mode, illumines the object.

(4) The mental mode associates the object - consciousness with the subject - consciousness.

(5) The subject perceives the object.

Consciousness manifest through the mental mode coincident with the object serves as the knowledge of the object.

This is known as phala (fruit), being the resultant knowledge.

The mind has three main divisions in this process, namely,

(1) the part within the body,

(2) the part that extends from the body to the object perceived,

(3) the part that coincides with the object.

The first part above is known as pramaataa and the consciousness manifest in it is called pramaata - chaitanya. This is the perceiver. The consciousness manifest in the second part is called pramaaNa - chaitanya, or the means of knowledge. The consciousness manifest in the third part is pramiti - chaitanya or percept.

The object perceived is called prameya. Since the third part of the mind mentioned above coincides with the object, prameya - chaitanya, or the consciousness underlying the object and pramiti - chaitanya become identical. The point to be kept in mind here is that all objects in this world are superimposed on Consciousness, i.e. Brahman. All objects are covered by a veil of ignorance, which has to be removed for seeing the object. It is only consciousness that reveals the objects, since the objects themselves are non - luminous.

34. Upanishad - Meaning

KaThopanishad. S.B. Introduction - - - saderdhatoH vis'araNa - - - - vidyaa uchyate.

The word 'Upanishad' is derived by adding the prefixes 'upa' (near) and 'ni' (with certainty) and the suffix 'kvip' to the root 'sad' meaning ' to destroy, to go to and to loosen'. By the word 'Upanishad' is meant the knowledge that destroys the seeds of worldly existence such as ignorance in the case of those seekers of liberation who, after cultivating detachment towards all enjoyments, approach (upa,sad) this knowledge and then deliberate on it with steadiness and certainty (ni). Though this knowledge is the primary meaning of the word, it is used also to denote the book that contains this knowledge, in a secondary sense.

Br.up.1.1.S.B.Introduction -- saa iyam brahmavidyaa - - - - upanishad uchyate.

The knowledge of Brahman is called 'upanishad' because it entirely removes this relative world together with its cause from those who take to this study; for the root 'sad' prefixed by 'upa' and 'ni' means that. Books also are called 'upanishad' as they have the same end in view.

There is no contradiction between the upanishads and the ritualistic portion (karma kanda) of the Vedas.

Br.up.2.1.20.S.B -- tasmaat na brahmaikatvam - pramaaNaani s'rotraadivat. Therefore the Vedaanta texts that teach the oneness of Brahman are not antagonistic to the ritualistic portion. Nor are the latter deprived of their scope by the former. Neither do the ritualistic scriptures, which are based on differences such as the factors of an action, take away the authority of the upanishads as regards the oneness of Brahman. For the means of knowledge are exclusively powerful in their respective spheres, just as the ear alone has the power to hear sounds and the eye alone to see forms, etc.

The ritualistic portion of the Vedas ceases to apply only after a person has attained Self - knowledge and has become liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Till then it remains applicable.

35. Mind, Vital Force and Speech

Ch.up.6.5.1.S.B -- Food, when eaten, becomes divided in three ways. The grossest portion of the food turns into faeces. The medium constituent becomes flesh. The subtlest part, having reached the heart, enters into the fine nerves named hitaa, becomes transformed into the mind - stuff and nourishes the mind. It therefore follows that the mind is made of matter. It is not considered as eternal and partless as defined by the Vais'eshikas. (It is of the size of the body -- madhyama parimaaNa).

Ch.up.6.5.2.S.B - - - Water (or any liquid) when drunk becmes divided in three ways. The grossest portion becomes urine. The medium constituent becomes blood. The subtlest part becomes the vital force (praaNa). Ch.up.6.7.1 says -- "The vital force is made up of water. It will depart from him who does not drink water".

Ch.up.6.5.3.S.B -- Butter, oil, etc, when consumed, become divided in three ways. The grossest portion becomes bone. The medium constituent becomes marrow, the greasy substance inside the bones. The subtlest part becomes the (subtle) organ of speech (vaak). It is a well - known fact that by the consumption oil, butter and the like, speech becomes clear and powerful. Ch.up.6.5.4.S.B -- Therefore the mind is made of food, the vital force is made of water and speech is made of tejas or fire (i.e. butter, oil, etc).

36. Upaasanam (Meditation)

B.S.1.1.12 . - - - evam ekamapi brahma apekshitopaadhisambandham nirastopaadhisambandham cha - - - - - - - upadis'yate.

Thus the same Brahman is taught in the upanishads as associated with limiting adjuncts to be meditated on and as devoid of limiting adjuncts to be realized.

B.S.1.2.14.S.B - - - nirguNam api sadbrahma naamaruupagatairguNaiH - - - - - - - - - - tatra tatra upadis'yate.

Even though Brahman is without attributes, it is taught in the upanishads as possessed of the attributes of name and form for the purpose of meditation.

B.S.1.1.20.S.B - - - syaat parames'varasya api - - - - - - - saadhaka - anugrahaartham.

The Supreme Lord may take forms at will by His power of Maayaa for blessing spiritual aspirants.

B.S.4.1.1.S.B - - - vdyupaasyoH cha - - - - - - - - prayogaH dr.s'yate.

The verbs 'vid' and 'upaas' are seen to be used interchangeably in the upanishads. See Ch.up. 3.18.1, 3.18.3, 4.1.4, 4.2.2.

taitt.up.1.3.S.B - - - upaasanam cha yathaas'aastram - s'aastroktaalambanavishayaa cha.

Meditation consists in a continuous flow of one and the same thought as laid down by the scripture, uninterrupted by other thoughts and fixed on some perceptible object as prescribed by the scripture.

taitt up. 1.6.S.B. brahmaNaH saakshaat upalabdhyartham - - - - - - s'aalagraama iva vishNoH. - - - The s'ruti declares that the hr.dayaakaas'a, the bright space in the heart, is the proper place for the contemplation and immediate perception of Brahman.

Br.up.1.3.9.S.B - - - upaasanam naama - - - laukikaatma - abhimaanavat.

Meditation is mentally approaching the form of the deity as it is presented in the eulogistic portion of the Vedas relating to the objects of meditation and concentrating on it, keeping out all other thoughts till one becomes as completely identified with that form as the ordinary man is with his own body.

Br.up.1.3.16.S.B - - - 'tam yathaa yathopaasate - - - - - tadeva bhavati'.

"One becomes exactly as one meditates upon Him". (S'atapatha BraahmaNa - X.5.2.20).

Different kinds of upaasanaas.

B.S.1.1.12.S.B - - - - - tatra avidyaavasthaayaam - - - - sa sa iis'vara ityupaasyatayaa chodyate.

It is only in the state of nescience (ajnaana) that Brahman can be considered as coming within the range of empirical dealings comprising the object of meditation, the meditator, the act of meditation etc. Among such meditations, some are for the attainment of higher worlds, some for making rites more efficacious and some for the attainment of liberation by stages (kramamukti). Those that lead to higher worlds are those meditations that are based on symbols, such as "One who meditates upon name as Brahman becomes independent so far as name reaches" (Ch.up.7.1.5), which are referred to in B.S.4.3.15 &16. These lead to higher worlds upto the world of lightning mentioned in

Ch.up.5.10.2 and not beyond that. An example of an upaasanaa which increases the efficacy of rites performed is the udgiita upaasanaa described in Ch.up.1.9.2. The meditations which lead to kramamukti are s'aaNDilya vidyaa in

Ch.up.3.14, dahara upaasanaa in Ch.up. 8.1 and ahamgraha upaasanaas, based on self - identification in which the individual thinks of himself as Brahman.

These meditations differ in accordance with the qualities (e.g. Brahman as possessed of particular attributes), or conditioning factors (e.g. Brahman meditated on as being in the heart, etc). These are elaborated in B.S.3.3.58.S.B. Although the same Brahman is to be meditated on as possessed of different qualities, the results differ, depending on the quality meditated on, as stated in the S'ruti, "One becomes what one meditates on".

B.S. 1.1.12 S.B - - Although it is the same Self that remains hidden in all beings - - moving or stationary - - there are differences in the degree of manifestation of glory and power, caused by the gradation of the minds by which the Self is conditioned. This is the significance of Bhagavad - gita, Ch.10.41 -- "Whatever being there is, which is great, prosperous or powerful, know that to be a product of a part of my splendour". It is enjoined in this verse that wherever there is extraordinary greatness, etc, it is to be worshipped as God.

Meditation on saguNa brahman leads to realization of nirguNa brahman.

Kaivalya Up. 7 -- "Having meditated on the highest Lord (S'iva) who is powerful, has three eyes and a blue neck and is the consort of Umaa, the sage reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and beyond avidyaa.

Vedaanta Kalpataru of Amalaananda Sarasvati -- Gloss relating to Brahmasuutra 1.1.20 - - - When their minds are brought under control by meditation on Brahman as possessed of qualities, that very Brahman will directly manifest Itself divested of the superimposition of limiting adjuncts.

37. Deva and Asura - Meaning

Br.up.1.3.1.S.B -- devaas'cha asuras'cha - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - atyanta - yatna - saadhyaa hi sa.

The devas and the asuras are the organs of speech, etc, of Prajaapati himself. They become devas when they shine under the influence of thoughts and actions as laid down in the scriptures, while those very organs become asuras when they are under the influence of natural thoughts and actions, based only on perception and inference and directed merely towards visible, material ends. They are called asuras because they delight only in their own senses, or because they are other than gods (or suras). The devas are fewer in number than the asuras, because, as we know, the organs have a stronger tendency towards thoughts and actions that are natural than towards those that are prescribed by the scriptures, for the former lead to visible, material ends. The tendency to adhere to the prescriptions of the scriptures is rare, because it is attainable only by great and sincere effort.

Ch.up.1.2.1.S.B - - - devaaH diivyateH dyotanaarthasya - - - indriyavr.ttayaH eva.

The word 'deva' is derived from the root 'div' in the sense of shining. (This root has many meanings). It therefore means the functions of the organs when they are illumined by the scriptures. The asuras are the natural, unillumined (ignorant) activities of the organs, opposed to the devas, because of being engrossed in the enjoyment of sense - objects. From time immemorial a war, as it were, has been going on in the minds of all individual beings, between the gods and the demons, with each side intent on defeating the other.

iis'aavaasya up. 4. S.B -- dyotanaat devaaH - - -

Here the word 'devaaH' means the organs of knowledge such as the eyes.

Br. up. 5.2.3.S.B - - - athavaa na devaa asuraa vaa - - - - - - - - - - - kruuraaH cha dr.s'yante.

Or, there are no gods or asuras other than men. Those among men who are lacking in self - control, but are otherwise endowed with many good qualities, are the gods. Those who are particularly greedy are men, while those who are cruel and given to injuring others are the asuras. So members of the same species, man, are given the titles of god, man and demon according to the predominance of the three gunas in them. The instructions given by Prajapati in this section are therefore meant for all men.

38. Parinaama and Vivarta (Transformation and Transfiguration)

When the cause and effect are of the same order of reality, the effect is a transformation or parinaama of the cause, as for example, when milk turns into curd. When the cause and effect belong to different orders of reality, as when a rope appears as a snake, the effect is called a vivarta or transfiguration of the cause.

Mandukya Karika - III.6. Bhashya - A gold ornament is a transformation (vikara or pariNaama) of gold and foam, bubbles and ice are of water.

But in the Bhashya on Ch. up. 6.2.2 it is said that pot, etc are merely different configurations (samsthaanamaatram) of earth, etc. This is compared to a rope appearing as a snake i.e. vivarta. So it appears that pot is only a vivarta of clay and not a parinama. The same is stated in Anubhootiprakasa on Aitareya up.

The author of Samkshepas'aariirakam says that the theory of transformation of Brahman as the universe serves as the prelude to the theory of transfiguration. In II.56 it is said that the author of the Brahmasuutras puts forth the doctrine of transfiguration (vivarta) as his final conclusion. In II.64 it is said that the theory of transformation is advanced as a preliminary to the theory of transfiguration.

Glimpses of Vedanta

By S. N. Sastri

Contents

1. Introduction to Advaita Vedanta

The term 'Vedanta' stands for the Upanishads as a whole, which form part of the Vedas. It would therefore be appropriate to give a general account of the Vedas before going on to deal with Vedanta.

In the Indian tradition, philosophy is termed 'darsana', a Sanskrit word meaning 'seeing' or 'experiencing'. This indicates that the aim of philosophy in India is direct experience of the ultimate Reality and not mere intellectual speculation as in Western philosophy. The Indian philosophical systems are classified into two broad categories known as 'aastika darsanas' and 'naastika darsanas'. There are no exact equivalents to these terms in English, though the terms 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' are sometimes used. It would be wholly misleading to use the terms 'theistic' and 'atheistic' for these categories. The term 'aastika' has been defined as referring to a person who, or a system which, accepts, (1) the authority of the Vedas, (2) the doctrine of rebirth and (3) the existence of other 'lokas' or spheres of experience. In the category of aastika darsanas fall those systems which accept the authority of the Vedas. These are the six systems known as Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purvamimamsa and Uttaramimamsa (or Vedanta). Even among these six, it is only the last two that base themselves directly on the Vedas and accept nothing that goes against them. The other four systems are based more on independent grounds of logic and reasoning, but they too are not opposed to the Vedas.

In the category of naastika darsanas fall the four schools of Buddhism, Jainism and the Carvaka (or atheistic) school, which do not accept the authority of the Vedas. These also make up a total of six.

The Vedas

All the six aastika darsanas regard the Vedas as the record of the divine truths revealed to the sages (Rishis or seers) in their supra-normal consciousness. The sages are not the authors of the Vedas. They are known as 'seers' of the Vedic mantras. The traditional view is that the Vedas are eternal. The word 'Veda' means primarily 'knowledge' and secondarily the books in which that knowledge is recorded. This is not knowledge of the external world, but the knowledge of the supreme Truth which cannot be attained by any effort of the human mind. It has been categorically declared by our ancient sages that the Vedas have no validity in matters which fall within the domain of other valid means of knowledge such as perception and inference. Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on the Bhagavadgita, ch.18, verse 66: "The validity of the Vedas holds good only with regard to matters which cannot be known through such other valid means of knowledge as direct perception, etc., because the validity of the Vedas lies in revealing what is beyond direct perception. Even a hundred Vedic statements cannot become valid if they say that fire is cold or non-luminous. If a Vedic text says that fire is cold or non-luminous, one should assume that the intended meaning of the text is different, for otherwise its validity cannot be maintained. One should not interpret it in such a way as to contradict some other valid means of knowledge".

Because of this clear demarcation of the spheres of validity of the Vedas on the one hand and the other means of knowledge relied on by science on the other, no conflict between science and the Vedas can arise, similar to those which arose between the Church and the discoveries of scientists like Copernicus and Galileo in Europe. It is this knowledge contained in the Vedas that is considered to be eternal. Just as the law of gravity existed and operated even before it was discovered by Newton, the knowledge contained in the Vedas existed even before it became known to the sages.

The Vedas are considered to be 'apaurusheya', i.e., they are not human compositions. Even God is not the author of the Vedas. The eternal knowledge contained in the Vedas is only revealed by God to the sages in each cycle of creation. The Vedas are 'seen' or 'heard' by the sages and recorded by them or their disciples for the benefit of posterity. The Vedas are therefore termed sruti, or 'what is heard'. As distinguished from these are the smritis, which are all human compositions, based on the srutis. The Itihasas and Puranas come under the category of smriti. According to Manu, the greatest lawgiver of India, the smritis should be considered as an elaboration of the Vedas. However, it is an inviolable rule that, where there is a difference between the sruti and the smriti on any matter, the sruti has to be upheld and the smriti should be interpreted in conformity with it. The truths enshrined in the Vedas have been actually experienced again and again by successive generations of great souls. The experiences of great saints like Sri

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Bhagavan Ramana in recent times bear testimony to the authenticity of all that is stated in the Upanishads.

The Vedas are four in number: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. Each Veda consists of three parts: the karma-kanda, the upasana-kanda and the jnana-kanda. The karma-kanda is divided into samhitas and brahmanas. The samhitas are collections of mantras, or hymns in verse, most of which are praises or prayers addressed to various gods such as Indra, Varuna and Agni. They are chanted during the performance of sacrifices. The brahmanas are mostly in prose and contain detailed descriptions of sacrifices and instructions for the performance of sacrificial rites. The upasana-kanda deals with various meditations. The jnana-kanda consists of the Upanishads and this is what is denoted by the term 'Vedanta'.

These three kandas are, however, not mutually exclusive compartments. The highest philosophical truths, similar to those expounded in the Upanishads, are found also in the samhita and brahmana portions which deal mainly with Vedic rituals. It is further noteworthy that the Isavasyopanishad appears in the samhita portion of the Sukla Yajurveda, the Brihadaranyakopanishad forms the concluding portion of the Satapathabrahmana of the Sukla Yajurveda, the Chandogyopanishad constitutes eight chapters of the Chandogyabrahmana of Samaveda and the Kenopanishad forms the ninth chapter of the Talavakarabrahmana of Samaveda. All these form part of jnanakanda, in spite of their being located right inside the samhitas or brahmanas. The term 'Vedanta' should therefore be understood to mean the ultimate conclusion or the highest philosophy of the Vedas and not the end portion of the Vedas.

The triple texts

The source books of Vedanta are the triple texts, Prasthanatraya, namely, the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita and the Brahmasutras.

The Upanishads

The word 'Upanishad' is derived by adding the prefixes 'upa' (near) and ni' (with certainty) to the verbal root 'sad' meaning ' to destroy, to go to and to loosen'. By the word 'Upanishad' is meant the knowledge that destroys the seeds of worldly existence such as ignorance in the case of those seekers of liberation who, after cultivating detachment towards all enjoyments, approach (upa, sad) this knowledge and then deliberate on it with steadiness and certainty (ni). Though this knowledge is the primary meaning of the word, it is used also to denote the book that contains this knowledge, in a secondary sense. This knowledge is known as 'Brahmavidya'. The theme of all the Upanishads is Brahman, which is identical with the individual self. This subject is dealt with in detail later on.

It is not known with any certainty how many Upanishads existed originally, but 108 are now available to us. There are commentaries, known as 'bhashya' by Sri Sankara on eleven of these, namely, Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka and Nrsimhatapani upanishads. There is also a commentary on Svetasvatara upanishad, but there is difference of opinion among modern scholars about its authorship, though tradition attributes it to Sri Sankara.

The Bhagavad Gita
This is the second of the triple texts. It forms part of the great epic Mahabharata and is given the same authority as the upanishads. As is well known, the Bhagavadgita contains the teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukshetra. Sri Sankara has described it as the essence of the Vedas.

The Brahma Sutras
This work is attributed to sage Veda-Vyasa. It consists of short aphorisms, called sutras. There are in all 555 aphorisms. A total of 192 topics, known as adhikaranas are dealt with in these aphorisms. The purpose of these aphorisms is to explain the real import of various terms and statements in the upanishads and to reconcile apparent contradictions. Sri Sankara has explained the meanings of these aphorisms from the Advaitic point of view in his commentaries, known as ‘Bhashya’.

The essence of Advaita Vedanta
The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta has attracted intellectuals from all parts of the world because of the fact that it adheres to the strict rules of logic and does not demand blind faith or unquestioning acceptance. The student of Vedanta is asked to examine and think for himself before accepting the teachings of the Guru. But he must start with an open mind, a genuine desire to understand and an attitude of respect towards the scriptures. We find in the upanishads that the student frankly puts his doubts and objections to the Guru and the Guru very patiently clarifies his doubts and answers his objections. The upanishads are not for the intellectually indolent. There is a very important place for reason in Vedanta. The fundamental principle of Vedanta is that the final testimony of truth is actual spiritual experience. This makes it a very scientific system and therefore acceptable to intellectuals of the present day who swear by reason and the scientific method.

Dr. T.M.P.Mahadevan, the great Vedantic scholar, says in his book 'Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence': "We believe that Advaita is not a sectarian doctrine. It is the culmination of all doctrines, the crown of all views. Though other views may imagine themselves to be opposed to Advaita, Advaita is opposed to none. As Gaudapada, a pre-Sankara teacher of Advaita, says, Advaita has no quarrel with any system of philosophy. While

the pluralistic world-views may be in conflict with one another, Advaita is not opposed to any of them. It recognises the measure of truth that there is in each of them; but only, that truth is not the whole. Hostility arises out of partial vision. When the whole truth is realised, there can be no hostility. (Mandukya Karika, III. 17 & 18; IV. 5)".

The essence of Advaita has been stated by Sri Sankara in half a verse thus: Brahman is the only Reality, the universe has only apparent reality, and the individual self is non-different from Brahman.

Brahman is the only Reality. 'Reality' is defined as that which does not undergo any change at any time. By this test, Brahman, which is absolutely changeless and eternal, is alone real. The world keeps on changing all the time and so it cannot be considered as real. At the same time, we cannot dismiss it as unreal, because it is actually experienced by us. The example of a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light is used to explain this. The snake so seen produces the same reaction, such as fear and trembling of the limbs, as a real snake would. It cannot therefore be said to be totally unreal. At the same time, on examination with the help of a lamp it is found that the snake never existed and that the rope alone was there all the time. The snake cannot be described as both real and unreal, because these two contradictory qualities cannot exist in the same substance. It must therefore be said that the snake is neither real nor unreal. Such an object is described as 'mithya'. Just as the snake appears because of ignorance of the fact that there is only a rope, this world appears to exist because of our ignorance of Brahman. Thus the world is also neither real nor unreal; it is also 'mithya'. Just as the snake is superimposed on the rope, the world is superimposed on Brahman. Our ignorance of Brahman is what is called avidya or ajnaana or nescience. This ignorance not only makes us ignorant of Brahman, but it projects the world as a reality. The world has no reality apart from Brahman, just as the illusory snake has no reality apart from the rope. When the knowledge of Brahman arises, the world is seen as a mere appearance of Brahman. The illusory snake arose from the rope, was sustained by the rope and ultimately merged into the rope. Similarly, the world arises from Brahman, is sustained by Brahman and merges into Brahman on the attainment of knowledge. Another example is also given to explain this. Ornaments of different sizes and shapes are made out of one gold bar. Their appearance and the use for which they are meant vary, but the fact that they are all really nothing but gold, in spite of their different appearances and uses, cannot be denied. The appearance may change, a bangle may be converted into rings, but the gold always remains as gold. When we begin to look upon the bangles, rings, etc., as nothing but gold in essence, the differences between bangle and ring, ring and chain, etc., cease to count though they continue to retain their different shapes. Similarly, on the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman (which is the same as the Self), though the different forms continue to be seen by the

Jnaani, the realised soul, he sees them all only as appearances of the one Brahman. Thus the perception of difference between one person and another, or one thing and another, and the consequences of such perception, such as looking upon some as favourable and others as the opposite, and the consequent efforts to retain or get what is favourable and to get rid of or avoid what is not favourable, come to an end. This is the state of liberation even while living, which is known as Jivanmukti.

Every individual identifies himself with the physical body, the sense organs and the mind. When a person describes himself as stout or lean or fair-complexioned or dark, he is looking upon himself as the physical body to which these characteristics belong. When he says 'I see', 'I hear', 'I smell' and so on, he is identifying himself with the organs of sense which perform these functions. When he says 'I am happy' or 'I am unhappy', he is identifying himself with his mind. The Upanishads declare that all these identifications are wrong and that the human being is in reality not the body or the sense-organs or the mind, but Brahman, which is eternal, changeless and not affected by anything that happens to the body-mind complex. It is Brahman that appears as the jiva or individual because of identification with the body-mind complex. This body-mind complex, which makes the infinite, all-pervading Brahman appear as an individual limited to a particular body-mind complex, is known as the limiting adjunct or upadhi of Brahman. This wrong identification, which is called bondage, is due to our ignorance of our real nature. This ignorance is what is called avidya or nescience. When this ignorance is eradicated, the person remains established in his essence as the Self or Brahman-Atman. This is liberation. Thus liberation is not the attainment of some new state in some other world after the end of the present life. It is only the realisation, in this life itself, of what one has always been, namely Brahman, by the removal of the wrong notion that one is the body-mind complex. The illusory snake never existed. What existed even when the snake was seen was only the rope. Similarly, bondage has no real existence at all. Even when we are ignorant of Brahman and think of ourselves as limited by the body, we are really none other than the infinite Brahman. Liberation is thus only the removal of the wrong identification with the body, mind and senses. The attainment of the state of liberation-in-life or Jivanmukti is the ultimate goal of human life according to the upanishads. Three paths are laid down in the scriptures as the means to the attainment of this ultimate goal. These are karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnaana yoga. Here the word 'yoga' signifies 'the means'. That is to say, karma, bhakti sand jnaana are the means to the attainment of liberation. These are, however, not independent paths, but are intrinsically bound together. Karma yoga is the performance of all duties enjoined upon one by the scriptures, as well as the duties that are incumbent on one because of one's station in life. If these duties are performed without craving for the fruit of the actions and as an offering to God, they lead to purification of the mind by the eradication of desires and the

evil consequences of desire, namely, greed, anger, jealousy and other negative emotions. The very fact that all actions must be performed as an offering to God implies that one must have devotion to God. Thus the path of bhakti or devotion to God and the path of action, or karma yoga are intrinsically bound together and one cannot be practiced without the other. Thus karma yoga and bhakti yoga form one composite whole. As stated above, karma yoga is the means by which the mind becomes purified by the removal of all impurities in the form of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy. Bhakti yoga brings about concentration of mind. Only a mind which has become pure and one-pointed is capable of attaining self-knowledge. Jnaana yoga consists in hearing the exposition of the scriptures by the Guru, reflecting on what has been heard in order to remove all doubts, and meditation to realise as an actual experience what has been understood intellectually by hearing and reflection. A person who has, by this process, come to experience the truth that he is really the Atman and not the body, mind or sense-organs and remains firmly rooted in that experience is a liberated one or a Jivanmukta.

2. Mind is the key to happiness

We all know from our experience that no two persons are identical in their thoughts, their likes and dislikes, reaction to situations and so on. What is the reason for this diversity?. If we examine the composition of a human being we find that he is made up of three components. The first is the outer, physical body consisting of skin, muscles, bones, blood and the like. Then there is the mind, which term includes the intellect. The third is consciousness. The physical body is made up of the same chemicals in all human beings and so it cannot be the cause of the difference in character between one person and another. The consciousness is the same in all. We thus see that it is the mind that is the cause of diversity. According to our scriptures the mind performs four functions. These are: (1) evaluating the pros and cons of any situation, (2) ultimately coming to a decision on what is to be done, (3) storing the experiences and (4) identifying actions, thoughts, etc as one's own, in the form 'I am doing this', 'I did this', 'I am happy', 'I am sad', etc. The manner in which these functions take place can be explained by taking an illustration. I am walking along the road and I see at a distance a person whose gait seems to resemble that of a certain friend of mine, named Raman. I begin to debate whether the person I see at a distance is Raman or not. When he comes nearer and I am able to see his face clearly, I compare it with the memory of the face of Raman stored in my mind. If I find that the two tally, I decide that he is Raman and I greet him. It will be clear from this example that my decision and subsequent action are governed by the memory of the face of Raman stored in my mind. To generalise, all our reactions to various situations are governed by the impressions and experiences stored in the mind. Every action performed by us and every thought that arises in us

leaves an impression on the mind. We do not of course remember all our actions and thoughts, but all of them leave impressions. These impressions are what are known in our scriptures as samskaras or vasanas. It is these that decide how we react to particular situations. If the actions and thoughts are good, they leave good impressions and these will make the person act in a manner that contributes to the good of others and ultimately to his own good. Bad actions and thoughts leave bad impressions and these will make the person act in a manner that causes harm to others and ultimately to himself also. It is because of this that we are instructed by our scriptures to always do good deeds and think good thoughts and to refrain from all evil acts and thoughts. When a person acts in a manner beneficial to others, he feels joy at having made someone else happy. Selfishness, jealousy, anger, haughtiness and other such negative attitudes and emotions arise from the evil impressions left by evil thoughts and deeds. A person who is jealous, selfish, angry or haughty cannot be happy and he himself is the person who suffers most from such evil traits. On the other hand, a person who always harbours goodwill towards others will himself be always happy. Every individual is born with the impressions, both good and bad, which he had accumulated by his actions and thoughts in past births. When he dies, the impressions gathered in his mind go with him and will be present in his mind in the next birth. When a person dies, it is only his physical body that is cremated. His mind, which is called the subtle body in the scriptures, goes to other worlds and then comes back again to this earth in another body. Whether a person is born as a human being or as an animal, bird and so on depends on the impressions of his actions and thoughts left in his mind at the time of the death of his previous body. Even those who have been born with bad impressions can, by their effort, erase those bad impressions and create good impressions by their good actions and thoughts. This is what our scriptures exhort us to do. The ultimate goal of human life is to go beyond the cycle of repeated births and deaths. The essential requisite for this is the purification of the mind. A pure mind is one which is free from cravings for worldly pleasures. The Upanishads say that the mind itself is the cause of bondage which is the root cause of all sorrow, as well as of liberation which is a state of supreme bliss. The mind becomes the cause of bondage and consequent sorrow when it is agitated by desires. The same mind, when freed of desires, is the means to liberation. The secret of happiness thus lies in ridding the mind of all desires and elevating it by fixing it on the contemplation and worship of God.

There is an episode in Chapter 34 of Skandha X of Srimad Bhagavatam which illustrates vividly how haughtiness leads to downfall and suffering. Once the cow-herds of Gokula went, along with Lord Krishna, to a place called 'Ambikavanam'. Having bathed in the Saraswati river, they worshipped Lord Siva and His consort Goddess Ambika. They passed the night on the bank of the river, praying and fasting. Suddenly a python appeared and

began to devour Krishna's father Nandagopa. Hearing Nandagopa's cries the cowherds rushed to his rescue and belaboured the python with firebrands. In spite of severe beating the python did not release Nandagopa from its hold. Krishna then went and touched the python with his foot. At once the python changed into a very resplendent Vidyadhara (a semi-divine being). The Vidyadhara told Krishna "I am a Vidyadhara by name Sudarsana. Being endowed with extraordinary beauty and wealth, I was very haughty. Once, in my haughtiness, I ridiculed some great sages of the Angirasa line for their rather ugly looks. The sages cursed that I would become a python. You have now saved me from the effect of the curse". By being haughty because of his beauty he became a python which is a very repulsive creature. The lesson we have to learn from this story is that if a person is haughty because of his beautiful looks, he will be deprived of his beauty and will be born as a very ugly creature in his next birth. The story of the curse making the Vidyadhara a python is only another way of bringing out this truth. Extending this logic, it follows that if a person is haughty because of his wealth and therefore treats the poor with contempt or misuses his wealth to harm others, he will be born as a beggar in his next birth. If a person is haughty because of his learning, he will be deprived of learning and will be an illiterate person in his next birth. The lesson therefore is this. Never be haughty because of your wealth, beauty, learning or other accomplishments, but cultivate humility. Be kind and considerate to others who are less fortunate than you and do all that you can to help them.

Thus we find that the only way to get better births in future and to attain liberation ultimately is to strive hard to discard all evil traits which one is born with and to make the mind free from desires. These can be achieved only by the grace of God. The cultivation of intense devotion to God is therefore the prime requisite for the attainment of happiness.

3. Bondage and Liberation are only in the Mind
(An episode from Devi Bhagavatam)

The purpose of the Puranas is to expound the abstruse teachings of Vedanta in a manner easily intelligible to the common man. This is done through the medium of stories which convey profound truths under a very attractive garb. It happens sometimes that the same episode is narrated with substantial differences in different Puranas. This is because the stories themselves are not important; what are important are the lessons we derive from them. This is being stated here at the very outset because the story of Suka as it appears in Devi Bhagavatam, which is going to be narrated here, will be found to be totally at variance with what is found in Srimad Bhagavatam.

The main Puranas are eighteen in number. The authorship of all of them, except one, Vishnupurana, is attributed to sage Vyasa. Sage Parasara, father

of sage Vyasa, is considered to be the author of Vishnupurana. Of these, the two which are considered to be the most important are Srimad Bhagavatam and Devi Bhagavatam. The former is devoted to a description of the various incarnations of Lord Vishnu and the narration of His glories. The latter extols the glory of Bhagavati or Parasakti. Each of these Puranas contains about 18000 verses divided into twelve Skandhas. In Srimad Bhagavatam there are 335 chapters and in Devi Bhagavatam there are 318 chapters.

Lord Vishnu (or Narayana) and Bhagavati (or Narayani) are two aspects of the same Supreme Reality known as Brahman in the Upanishads. The concept of the Supreme Being as the Divine Mother of the universe has its basis in the Vedas themselves. The Rigveda contains the famous Devi Sukta, proclaimed, significantly, by a woman seer, Rishi Ambhrini. This hymn may be said to have laid the foundation for the whole doctrine of the manifestation of Chit-sakti as the universe and Her immanence in it.

After composing Devi Bhagavatam, sage Vyasa taught it to his son Suka. At this time Vyasa had a disciple who is referred to merely as 'Suta'. While Vyasa was teaching the Devi Bhagavatam to Suka, his disciple, Suta, who was present, also learnt it. It was Suta who narrated the Devi Bhagavatam to Saunaka and other sages in Naimisharanya, a very sacred spot.

The Devi Bhagavatam begins with a verse reminiscent of the Gayatri Mantra: "Om. May we meditate on that Primordial Vidya in the form of the all-pervading Consciousness, Who enlivens our intellect".

Vyasa and Suka

The episode narrated below appears in chapters 10 to 19 of Skandha I of Devi Bhagavatam:

Suka, the son of sage Vyasa, was the very incarnation of Vairagya (detachment). Soon after his birth he became the disciple of Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. After completing the study of all the scriptures within a very short period, he returned to his father's hermitage. In course of time Vyasa began to think of getting his son married, as only then would he become entitled to perform the religious duties prescribed in the Vedas for a house-holder. One day sage Vyasa told Suka, "My son, you have mastered the Vedas and all the other scriptures. You must now enter the stage of the grihasta by taking a wife. Only a grihasta can properly propitiate the manes and the gods. Your duty to me will also be fulfilled only if you marry. The scriptures say that one who has no son cannot get access to heaven. I am therefore very eager that you should marry. You were born as my son as the result of intense austerities practiced by me. It is therefore your duty to fulfill my wish by getting married".

Bonds of Samsara stronger than iron chains

Suka replied: "Father, it is no doubt true that a son should act according to the wishes of his father. But, at the same time, the father has a duty to give such advice to his son as would lead the latter to the highest good. I am surprised that you, who are so learned, are talking like an ignorant man bewildered by the power of Maya. You say that you want me to be happy. The happiness produced by worldly enjoyments is always mixed with sorrow. Is that real happiness? If I get married, I will have to act according to the wishes of the woman I marry. How can there be happiness when there is dependence on the will of another? One who has been bound by an iron chain may at some time be able to free oneself, but one can never free oneself from the bonds of his wife and children. Will one whose mind is set on the supreme bliss find any attraction in the pleasures of the flesh which are trivial and always mixed with sorrow? Instead of rescuing me from this ocean of Samsara, why are you trying to immerse me deeper into it? It is only the ignorant who will find happiness in worldly life, just as worms are happy in filth. One who, even after having attained a human birth which is so difficult to get and having, in addition, studied all the scriptures, is still attached to the world, is no better than a dog or a pig. Only that person is really learned who strives for liberation from Samsara".

To this Vyasa said: "What you say may, on the surface, appear to be quite logical, but the fact is that you are labouring under some wrong notions. What binds a man is not wife or children or home but the mind. One who is mentally free is not bound even if he has a family and one who is not mentally free is in bondage even if he is outwardly in the Sannyasa Ashrama. Whether a person lives in a house or a hermitage or in the forest, it is the mind that is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation. A householder who does not swerve from the path of righteousness, performs all the duties ordained by the scriptures and does not harm any creature is truly a liberated person. All the other three Ashramas depend on the householder for sustenance. How exalted the Grihastashrama is! Heaven and liberation are within easy reach of one who conducts his life according to the scriptures, in whatever Ashrama he may be. One who transgresses the tenets of the scriptures has no hope of spiritual evolution, even if he is a Sannyasi. The stage of the householder is as difficult as it is exalted. The way to the fourth stage, Sannyasa, is through that of the householder. There is a great risk in jumping from Brahmacharya to Sannyasa. The right path is to live the life of a householder in accordance with the scriptures, then hand over the responsibility of the household to the son, take Vanaprastha and then Sannyasa. You know that the mind and the senses are very powerful. They are likely to make a man go astray. A Brahmachari should, therefore, get married at the proper time. It is very difficult to control the senses when one is young. For your own good, therefore, you should get married. There is nothing wrong whatsoever in this course".

On hearing these words of his father Suka replied: "Whatever you may say, I will not marry. Marriage is undoubtedly a bondage. It can never bring real happiness. One who gets married will have to worry about the means of earning wealth. One whose mind is occupied with the thought of acquiring wealth can never be happy. If he is not able to earn money and remains poor, his relations will treat him with contempt. If he earns wealth, there will be other problems. To earn wealth one has to deviate from the path of righteousness. One who strictly adheres to the path of righteousness can never become rich. Indra, the king of the gods, has all the wealth of the three worlds at his command. But is he happy? He is afraid even of the starving ascetic. You know all this as well as I do. And yet you are trying to push me deeper into this terrible Samsara. The sorrow caused by birth, old age, disease and stay in the mother's womb can all be borne. But the sorrow caused by desire is worse than all these. Because of desire, even those who have mastered the Vedas and all the other scriptures wait at the door of the rich to get something. They bow low before him. They praise him to the skies. All this is just to fill the belly. Cannot the belly be filled with some fruit or root or leaf which can be got in the forest? Instead of that, why should one build a prison for oneself with wife and children? I am not in the least attracted by the Karma Kanda of the Vedas. Please therefore impart to me Jnana or Yoga. Tell me the means by which I can destroy all my Karma: Sanchita, Prarabdha and Agami. Please do not talk to me again about the bondage that marriage undoubtedly is".

On hearing these words of his son Vyasa was overwhelmed by grief. Tears came streaming down his cheeks. His body began to tremble. Seeing all this Suka said to himself: "O God! My father is reacting as if what I am proposing to do is a heinous crime. He is the author of the Vedanta sutras, the Puranas and the Mahabharata. He has divided the Vedas into four. He is reputed to be omniscient and a man of perfect discrimination. But see how Maya has overpowered even him! None can conquer this Maya. Even the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) act according to the commands of the Devi, who is Mahamaya".

Then he spoke to Vyasa thus: "You who are so learned are grieving like an ignorant man. How strange! What is the meaning of the words 'father', 'son' and the like? Who is the father and who is the son? Think who I, now your son, was in a previous birth. Is it not mere delusion to think "I am so and so"? Give up your grief, knowing that all this is Maya. What good can accrue to you from me? Each one has to undergo the consequences of his past actions. It is therefore meaningless to think that one can benefit or suffer due to the actions of some other person. A human birth on the earth is extremely difficult to get and even more so is birth in a noble family of learned persons. What a great pity it will be if one wastes such a birth by being overpowered by Maya!".

Vyasa was astonished to see such intense detachment in his son. He said: "O child, I am very happy to see your firm detachment. If it is still your desire to take Sannyasa you may do so. Such intense detachment is very rarely to be found. The scriptures say that persons with such total detachment can take Sannyasa direct from Brahmacharya. All the same, it will be good for you to study the Bhagavatam which I have composed. It is equal to the Vedas themselves.

Following Vyasa's advice, Suka studied the Bhagavatam. But even that did not clear his doubts and give him satisfaction. Vyasa then told him, "If my Bhagavatam has not cleared all your doubts, I advise you to go to the kingdom of Mithila. A king by name Janaka, who is a liberated soul, is governing that kingdom. He will clear all your doubts".

How can a ruler of a kingdom be a Jivanmukta?

Suka was surprised to hear this and told his father: "O father, what you say is very strange. A king who is governing a country is a Jivanmukta! You say that he will clear my doubts which even you have not been able to clear! Do you want me to go for advice to a householder, and that too a king who is ruling a country? To say that a Jivanmukta is ruling a country is as absurd as saying that a barren woman has given birth to a son. How can a king conquer his senses? Can one who is free from the notions of 'I' and 'mine' rule a country? How can a ruler who enjoys kingly pleasures, who distinguishes between heat and cold, pleasant and unpleasant, friend and foe, be a Jivanmukta? Can he look upon saint and sinner, sage and thief, friend and foe with an equal eye? If he can, how can he function as a ruler? If he cannot, how can he be a Jivanmukta? No one has seen a king who is also a Jivanmukta. All the same, I shall take your advice and go and see this Janaka".

Suka leaves for Mithila

So saying, he prostrated before his father and, after receiving his blessings, set out for Mithila. Before he left, Vyasa made him promise that he would return to Vyasa's hermitage from Mithila.

Suka walked through town and country, hills and dales, forests and fields; he passed through places inhabited by people following diverse customs and religious practices. At the end of three years he reached Mithila. At the entrance to the kingdom of Janaka the guards stopped him and asked him who he was and why he had come there. Suka stood motionless, without uttering a word in reply. The guards told him that they had orders from the king not to let anybody into the country without making full enquiries and finding out what he wanted.

Suka then told them, "My object in coming here has been achieved by your stopping me. It appears that even a Sadhu cannot enter the kingdom of Janaka who is said to be a Jivanmukta!. I have come here after crossing two huge mountains and braving great odds. It was none other than my father who prompted me to come here. But I do not blame him. It is the result of my own karma. Men are generally tempted by money, but I have absolutely no desire for money. It is only my Prarabdha karma that brought me here. It is strange that in this country which is ruled by a Jivanmukta even a Sadhu is not allowed to enter!". So saying, Suka continued to stand there. The guards then said, "O revered sir, we have now realised that you are a Mahatma. Please go in and forgive us for having stopped you".

Suka replied, "You have not done anything wrong. It is the duty of a servant to obey implicitly the orders of his master. You have been very correct in the performance of your duty and you should be commended for that. Nor is the king at fault. It is the duty of the king to find out whether a person entering his kingdom is worthy or not, whether he is an honest man or a thief, and so on. Without thinking about all this I have come here. It is wrong to enter another's house without being invited. That is what I have done. The fault is, therefore, entirely mine".

The guards then wanted to know from him the real import of the terms 'happiness', 'unhappiness', 'honour', 'dishonour', 'friend', 'enemy', etc,. Suka explained that when a person finds his wife, son and others behaving in the manner in which he wants them to behave, he feels happy. If not, he feels unhappy. In other words, happiness arises when a person finds other persons and things around him to be favourable to him and unhappiness when they are unfavourable. Everyone is all the time engaged in actions which are expected to bring happiness. Those who help him in this are considered to be friends and those who hinder him are considered enemies. A wise man is one who does not crave for worldly pleasures which attract the ignorant. For a man free from desires happiness lies in being alone and meditating on the Self. Contentment is his friend. Desire, anger and the like are his enemies.

Suka then entered the country of Mithila and continued to walk. When he reached the gates of the king's palace, he was stopped by the guards there. As before, he stood motionless, without uttering a word. Soon the king's minister went to the gate, having heard of the arrival of Suka. He saluted Suka and took him inside. There, in one of the inner chambers of the palace, a number of beautiful young damsels came to attend on him. The minister left, leaving Suka with the damsels. Suka sat down and went into meditation. All the efforts of the damsels to distract him and make him take interest in them failed.

Suka and Janaka
King Janaka himself then came there and after respectfully bowing before Suka he took Suka to his assembly hall. The king then asked Suka the reason for his visit. Suka said, "O king, you have perhaps by now come to know that I am the son of sage Vyasa. After completing my studies under Brihaspati, I returned to my father's hermitage. My father then asked me to get married, saying that the Grihasthashrama is the greatest of all the four Ashramas. I felt strongly that marriage is a bondage and that it takes one away from liberation. I was not convinced by all the reasons given by my father in favour of marriage. He then asked me to approach you and get my doubts cleared. I have come in obedience to his words. O king, kindly tell me what is the means to liberation: austerity, performance of yajnas, etc., or knowledge".

Janaka said: "I shall tell you what an aspirant for liberation should do. After being invested with the sacred thread, he should go to a Guru and study the Vedas. After completing his studies and having given Gurudakshina, he should enter the stage of the householder by getting married. He should then perform the rites laid down in the Vedas without attachment. He should be truthful, compassionate and free from all desires and cultivate purity of mind and body. He should also beget progeny. He need remain with his family only till his first-born son gets married. Thereafter he may enter the Vanaprastha Ashrama. After conquering the six internal enemies, namely, desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy, he may take Sannyasa. It should be noted that Sannyasa is only for those who have attained total detachment. Out of the 48 Samskaras laid down in the scriptures, 40 are for householders and the remaining 8 are for Sannyasis".

Suka asked: "For a person who has attained Jnana, Vijnana and Vairagya, is it compulsory to go through all the four Ashramas one after another? Can he not go straightaway to the Sannyasa Ashrama from Brahmacharya?

Janaka: "O young sage! understand that the senses are very powerful. They cannot be relied upon. Disaster may befall the immature. If a person who is not yet fit takes Sannyasa and if thereafter desire for food, wealth, children or other comforts arises in his mind, what is the way out for him? Since vasanas will not get extinguished by themselves, a wise man should first eradicate them before taking Sannyasa. The impact of a fall is greater for a person who is at a height. A person at the lowest level cannot fall; he can only go up. A person who wants to climb up has to be very careful. If a Sannyasi falls, there is no remedy for him. The senses cannot be subdued by force. To attain complete control over the senses one should go through the Ashramas, one by one. A man of wisdom will not be affected by the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, honour and dishonour, or gain and loss, even if he is a householder. Look at me. I rule the kingdom, I perform all my duties, I eat

what I want and experience everything. At the same time, am I not liberated? You can also be like that. Bondage and liberation are both in the mind. If the mind is impure, nothing will be achieved by bathing in all the sacred rivers. If the mind is controlled, there can be no talk of bondage or liberation. It is only the mind that makes distinctions such as friend and foe, and the like".

Suka: "You say that the rituals laid down in the Karmakanda of the Vedas should be performed meticulously. But how can the cruel deed of sacrifice of animals be the means to liberation? Is not the drinking of soma juice in a sacrifice clearly contrary to Dharma? Are not killing of animals and eating their flesh unrighteous acts? Moreover, all that can be attained through these Vedic rituals is enjoyment of the pleasures of heaven for a limited period. They cannot confer liberation. Heaven is only a chain made of gold, which can bind a man as effectively as an iron chain. My mind is not at all attracted by such transient pleasures, which ultimately lead only to sorrow".

The secret of Karma

Janaka: "O wise young sage! You have not yet understood these matters correctly. You have been looking only at the external appearance of things. That way you get only superficial knowledge. You have to go deeper to understand subtle truths. It is not the outward appearance that decides what is righteous and what is not. This is the secret of Karma. The same action may amount to injury to a living creature in one situation, but not so in another.

The Vedas declare that the killing of an animal in a Vedic sacrifice is not violence. If it is done without attachment and craving for the fruit, it is not violence, but even that would become violence if there is attachment and desire for the fruit. Any action done without attachment and without the sense of doer-ship is no action at all and it does not create any bondage.

Suka: "What you say may be true in the case of a person who is free from desire. But how can one who is under the control of Maya become free from desire? When even those who have mastered the scriptures are not free from attachment and aversion, what to speak of the ordinary man? Mere study of the scriptures will not destroy nescience (ignorance of the Self). Can darkness be removed by merely shouting 'light, light'? You said, "Look at me". I have looked at you carefully. I do not find you to be in any way different from other worldly men. I see you only as a king possessed of wealth, fame, power and all objects of enjoyment. Notions of friend and foe, happiness and sorrow, likes and dislikes -- you have all these as much as anyone else. And you call yourself Videha (meaning Jivanmukta). This is nothing but vanity. It is like an illiterate fool bearing the name 'Vidyadhara', a blind man being named 'Divakara' (which means sun) or a beggar having the name 'Lakshmidhara'. The name 'Videha' given to you is as meaningless as these. It is only a title that you have inherited from your ancestors who got it somehow, without any

reason to justify it. Whatever that may be, as far as I am concerned, I am not at all interested in home, wife, children or wealth. I wish to remain free from all such bondage".

Janaka replied: "O sage, you think you can be free from all bondage if you go and dwell in the forest. Remember that there are animals there also and you can develop likes and dislikes towards them. The same five elements which are here are present in the forest also. How can you be free from any connection with them? As long as you have a body, you will need food. The thought about food will be with you even in the forest. Can you become free from thoughts about your yogadanda (staff), your deer-skin and your water pot? The thoughts I have about my kingdom are also only of the same nature. It is not the quantity or quality of what one has that makes for bondage, but it is the sense of possession. A renunciate attached to his loincloth is not less in bondage than a king attached to his kingdom. It is the thought that this body is yours that is the fundamental bondage. Being free from all sense of possession and knowing that I am not bound, I remain happy all the time, whatever I do. You, on the contrary, are always sad, thinking that you are in bondage. Giving up this wrong notion, know that you are never in bondage and that you are ever free and be at peace with yourself. If you understand this truth, you will realise that a man fully engaged in action can still be completely liberated".

Conclusion

On hearing these words of Janaka, Suka realised that bondage does not arise from action, that none can remain without performing any action and that it is one's attitude towards action that creates the distinction between bondage and liberation. He took leave of Janaka and returned to his father's hermitage. He married Peevaree, the daughter of the manes. He begot four sons and a daughter. Thereafter he left for Kailasa and did penance there. Finally he cast off his body and attained Videhamukti.

4. Means To Self-realisation

Many of us have studied the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita and acquired an intellectual understanding of their teachings. We know intellectually that we are not the body or the mind or the intellect, that we are in reality the self or Atma which is beyond these and which gives consciousness to the body, mind and intellect and enables them to function. We know that the joys and sorrows arising from our contact with the external world pertain only to the body, mind and intellect and not to the self which cannot be touched by them. But we also know that this intellectual understanding is not enough and that unless this matures into actual experience we cannot say that we have attained the ultimate goal of human life. The goal to be attained is a state in which we remain absolutely unaffected by joys and sorrows, pleasure and

pain, success and failure and all such pairs of opposites. What is it that prevents our intellectual knowledge from becoming translated into actual experience? We can find out the answer to this question by taking two examples, one in which an intellectual understanding gets translated into actual experience and another in which it does not.

A person is given a dish which he has never tasted before and he is told that it is a very sweet dish. He now has an intellectual understanding about the nature of the dish, namely, that it is very sweet, but he has not actually experienced the sweetness. He puts a bit of it on his tongue and actually experiences its sweetness. Here his intellectual understanding has been translated into actual experience and the two are fully in accord with each other. But suppose this person is, at this time, suffering from some illness which makes everything taste bitter in his mouth. Even if he is fully convinced that the dish must be sweet as he has been told by the person who gave it to him, he is not able to experience that sweetness, but he experiences only a bitter taste. His illness obstructs his intellectual knowledge from being translated into actual experience.

We can take another example. There are persons in our country in some of the interior States who have never seen the sea. Take one such person who has read everything about the sea in books. He knows that the sea is a very vast stretch of water, that waves constantly rise and fall in it, that one cannot see the other shore, and so on. When he actually goes to some place on the sea coast, he experiences all that he has learnt from books. But suppose this person is taken blindfolded to the sea. Then he will not be able to experience what he has learnt from books. The bandage on his eyes prevents his intellectual knowledge from becoming an actual experience.

In the same way there is some obstruction because of which our intellectual understanding acquired from the scriptures does not mature into actual experience. The obstruction is the mind which is full of desires and is therefore all the time going out into the external world through the sense-organs. If this obstruction is removed, we will be able to experience what we know intellectually. The means by which this obstruction can be removed and the actual experience of what is taught in the Upanishads, which is what is known as Self-realisation, can be attained are described in the Bhagavadgita.

The Lord says in the Gita that knowledge is enveloped by ignorance and therefore all living beings are deluded (Ch.5.15). When it is said that A envelops B, it clearly follows that both A and B are positive entities and they exist at the same place at the same time. That means that both knowledge and ignorance exist in us at the same time. This would appear to be opposed to reason if we understand 'ignorance' as meaning merely 'absence of knowledge'. But in Vedanta ignorance or Avidya or Ajnaana is not mere

absence of knowledge; it is of the nature of a positive entity, described as 'Bhaavarupa', as opposed to 'Abhaava' which is a mere negation or non-existence. Knowledge here does not mean 'knowledge of an object'. It means Brahman or Atman, which is of the nature of Knowledge or Pure Consciousness. This Atman, which is our own essence, does not become manifest to us because of the Ajnaana which covers it, just as on a very cloudy day the sun, being hidden by the clouds, is not visible to us. Actually, what is covered by the clouds is not the sun, which is much bigger than the clouds, but our vision. Similarly, when it is said that ignorance covers the Atman, what is meant is that ignorance covers our mental vision and prevents us from experiencing that we are the Atman or Brahman and not the body-mind complex. If this ignorance or Ajnaana is removed, the Atman will shine forth in all its splendour (Gita, 5.16). What has therefore to be done is only the removal of ignorance and not the production of knowledge, which is eternally present and which is our very essence, or our real nature. The mind functions through the sense-organs. The Kathopanishad says that the sense-organs are all directed outward and so they are incapable of knowing the Atman which is within. A rare person, having acquired total detachment, withdraws all his senses from their objects and concentrates the mind on the Atman and thus realises that he is the Atman and not the body, mind or intellect (Kath.up.II.1.i). This is Self-realisation. By this means the obstruction caused by the mind id removed. This is known in Vedanta as manonaasa or destruction of the mind. But what is destroyed is not the mind itself, but its tendency to go out through the sense-organs and experience objects and feel attachment towards those that are pleasant and aversion towards those that are unpleasant. This attachment and aversion, which find place in every individual, are the actual obstructions to Self-realisation. As the Gita says, each sense-organ has either attachment or aversion towards its objects. Attachment and aversion are the enemies who block a person's path to liberation. One should therefore take care to see that he does not fall a victim to them, by rooting them out (3.34).

A very apt illustration in this regard is found in Vedanta texts. When a potter makes a pot, he does not have to make any special effort to fill it with space. But if one fills the pot with water, there will be no space inside the pot. In other words, the space becomes covered by water. If the water is poured out, the pot becomes filled with space again. If you want to fill the pot with any other substance, say, rice, you have to make an effort, but if you again want the pot to have only space inside, all that you have to do is to remove whatever other substance is inside it. In the same way, Atma is ever existent in the mind, like space in the pot, but it is covered by all other thoughts. When the mind is emptied of all other thoughts, the Atma will shine forth. This is what is called Self-realisation. The following passage in the 'Jivanmuktiviveka' of Swami Vidyaranya makes this very clear: "A pot of clay, when made, comes filled with the all-pervading space; thereafter, filling it up with water,

rice or any other substance is due to human effort. Though the water, etc., in the pot can be taken out, the space inside cannot be removed; it continues to be there even if the mouth of the pot be hermetically sealed. In the same way, the mind, in the act of being born, comes into existence full of the all-pervading Self that is pure Consciousness itself (Atma-chaitanya). The mind takes on after its birth, owing to the influence of merit and demerit, the forms of pleasure, pain and other such transformations. While these can be removed from the mind, the form of the Self, which does not depend on any external cause, cannot be removed". It is therefore said:- "One should cause the mind, which by its very nature is ever prone to assume the form of either the Self or the not-Self, to throw into the background its perceptions of the not-Self, by taking the form of the Self alone".

5. Anatomy of Bhakti

To the common run of people the practice of Bhakti means nothing more than going to the temple regularly or worshipping God by means of rituals in an image or other symbol at home. The persons who do this consider themselves to be Bhaktas and are considered so by others also. While such regular worship is certainly necessary and should be practised by everyone, the Bhagavata Purana says that much more is expected of one who wants to be considered a devotee in the true sense of the term. Sage Kapila, an incarnation of the Lord, explains in the third Skandha of Srimad Bhagavata who a real devotee is. He says that a man who worships God in an image, but looks upon other human beings with contempt and exploits them, makes a mockery of worship, unmindful of the fact that the same God dwells in them also. The Lord will not be pleased even though worshipped in an image by means of rituals with costly materials, by a person who does not see the same God in all beings. The worship of God through rituals laid down in the scriptures is no doubt an essential ingredient of Bhakti, but it is not an end in itself. It is only the means to the realization of the presence of the same divinity in all beings. A person who exploits others or treats them with contempt and has no consideration for their feelings and rights cannot qualify as a Bhakta even if he assiduously performs ritual worship meticulously every day. This is the gist of verses 21 to 25 of chapter 29 of Skandha III of Bhagavata.

Now let us see what the great sage Narada says about Bhakti. Narada says in Narada Bhakti sutra that Bhakti is supreme love of God. Here it must be clarified that God is not some Being residing somewhere in the heavens who stands apart from the world, but God is the Indwelling Self of all living beings in this world. Thus love of God means love of all creatures, who are all His manifestations. Narada further says that an essential characteristic of Bhakti is the dedication of all activities to God. Thus what is described as Karmayoga in the Bhagavadgita is also an essential ingredient of Bhakti

according to Narada. A Bhakta is thus one who does not separate religious and secular activities, but considers all of them as service of God. The Lord says in the Gita (18.46) that the performance of one's duties is itself worship of God and is the means to spiritual progress. A person who looks upon every action, whether religious or secular, as worship of God will act without selfishness and will not harm others in any way. Narada declares that the highest exemplars of Bhakti are the Gopikas, who dedicated all their actions to Lord Krishna and whose minds were always engrossed in the thought of Krishna.

The Bhagavata, in Skandha XI, chapter 2, verses 45 to 47 divides devotees into three categories according to the progress achieved by them in the path of devotion. The highest category, called Bhaagavatottama, is: "He who sees himself in all creatures and all creatures in his own self". That is to say, he realizes that the same Self pervades the whole universe and he therefore looks upon all creatures in the world as God. He does not see any difference between himself and others. Thus the foremost devotee is also a Jnaani, one who has ceased to identify himself with his limited personality.

The second category of devotees is: "He who cherishes love for the Lord, is friendly towards other devotees, compassionate towards the ignorant and does not harbour any enmity even towards those inimical to him". Such a person has not yet got over the sense of difference between himself and others, but has progressed to the extent of being free from pride, arrogance and hatred.

The last category of devotees is: "He who worships the Lord with faith in an image, but does not serve His devotees or other beings". Even such a person is far superior to the pseudo-Bhakta referred to earlier, because, while the former has faith in God and considers worship as his duty, the latter looks upon God merely as a means for the fulfilment of his selfish desires. The latter does not deserve to be called a Bhakta at all. Prahlada says in the Bhagavata that a person who worships God expecting some worldly benefit in return is not a devotee at all, but only a trader (Bh. VII. 10.4).

In Sivanandalahari Sri Sankara defines Bhakti as that state of mind in which all thoughts are directed only towards the lotus feet of the Lord, just as the seed of the Ankola tree sticks to the tree itself on falling down, the iron needle jumps towards the magnet, the devoted wife thinks always of her husband, the creeper clings to a tree and the river keeps flowing towards the ocean.

At the highest level, Bhakti and Jnana are the same. This becomes clear if we compare the descriptions given of a Sthitaprajna in chapter 2 and a Bhakta in chapter 12 of the Gita, which are identical in essence.

The paths of Bhakti and Jnaana are not independent of each other. True Bhakti presupposes knowledge of the relationship between God and the world. Without this knowledge Bhakti will be nothing more than blind belief in some superhuman power called God, who blesses those who worship him and punishes those who do not. Such blind belief will crumble at the advent of the slightest adversity, because the person will feel that he has been let down by God on whom he had relied. But if he has some knowledge of the teachings of Vedanta, he will realise that sufferings are not inflicted on him arbitrarily by God, but are the result of his own past actions and that they are intended to cleanse his heart of impurities and engender in him an attitude of detachment towards worldly joys and sorrows. So also, if the path of Jnaana is followed without an element of Bhakti, it will become dry logic and the person will be devoid of love and compassion for other living beings. The upanishads themselves say that the Self cannot be realised by mere scholarship. The upanishads declare that ignorance of our true nature is the root cause of all our sufferings. Because of this ignorance, which is called Avidya, we identify ourselves with the body, the sense organs and the mind and attribute to ourselves the joys and sorrows which pertain only to the body and mind. In reality we are the Self or Atma which has no birth or death, hunger or thirst, sorrow or delusion, old age or disease. The wrong identification with the body, mind and senses is what is known as bondage. This bondage is not real, but is the result of Avidya or the ignorance of our real nature. What is caused by ignorance can be removed only by right knowledge. One point stressed by Advaita is that even when we look upon ourselves as individuals limited by the body, we are in reality none other than Brahman. It is not as if everyone is initially in bondage and becomes liberated on the dawn of Self-knowledge. Liberation is only the removal of the wrong identification with the body and mind and not the attainment of something which did not exist earlier.

Now a doubt may arise. Since liberation is attained only by Self-knowledge, what is the purpose served by Bhakti? The upanishads say that the mind is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation. It is like the key which locks as well as opens a door. When the mind is attached to sense objects it causes bondage. When it becomes free from such attachment, the very same mind is the means to liberation. Self-knowledge can arise only in a mind that has become free from all desires for worldly objects and enjoyments and is one-pointed. It is the nature of the mind to hanker after sense pleasures. The mind can be withdrawn from them only by attaching it to something else. This is the role played by Bhakti. As devotion to God takes root in the mind and grows, desires for worldly objects become gradually weaker and finally disappear. The Lord says in Srimad Bhagavata that, unlike attachment to worldly objects, attachment to God does not cause bondage, just as a burnt seed cannot germinate, though its appearance as a seed continues (Bh. X. 22. 26).

It is said in Srimad Bhagavata that devotion to God gives rise to detachment and leads to Self-knowledge (I.2.7). In the Bhagavadgita the Lord says that a devotee is one whose mind is always fixed on Him, who has surrendered himself totally to Him, who always recounts His glories and whoever revels in Him. The Lord confers on such a devotee the yoga of wisdom through which the devotee can attain to Him. The Lord dwells in his heart and dispels the darkness born of ignorance (Ch 10. sl. 9 to 11).

Madhusudana Saraswati, the great devotee and Advaitin and a celebrated commentator on the Bhagavadgita says in the introduction to his commentary that Bhakti pervades both Karmayoga and Jnaanayoga. He describes Bhakti as threefold: Bhakti combined with Karma, Bhakti by itself, and Bhakti combined with Jnaana. Karmayoga involves the dedication of the fruit of all activities to God. This necessarily implies devotion to God. Bhakti is thus an essential ingredient of Karmayoga. Jnaanayoga leads to the realisation of one's identity with Brahman. Identification is possible only when there is intense love. A husband and wife identify themselves with each other and with their children only because of love. Devotion, which is defined by sage Narada as supreme love of God, is thus an essential ingredient of Jnaanayoga also.

All teachers of Advaita have therefore stressed the importance of practicing both devotion and Knowledge together. Sri Sankara, the greatest exponent of Advaita and the greatest of Jnaanis, composed many soul-stirring hymns in praise of various deities in order that the emotional side of the human being may also be developed. It is therefore clear that there is no contradiction between Advaita and devotion to a Personal God (Saguna Brahman) as wrongly thought by some. It has been categorically declared that worship of Saguna Brahman is the best means to the realisation of Nirguna Brahman.

6. Gitacharya and Gopijanavallabha

It is said in Srimad Bhagavatam that the Lord, in His incarnation as Sri Krishna, graced the earth for 125 years (Bh. XI. 6.25). During this period Krishna took on many different roles, as Gopijanavallabha or the darling of the Gopis, as the slayer of many Asuras, as the messenger of the Pandavas to the Kauravas, as Arjuna's charioteer and as the Gitacharya, the exponent of the essence of the upanishads in the form of the Bhagavadgita. The most enchanting and significant of all these roles are those of the Gitacharya and the Gopijanavallabha. According to Swami Vivekananda, the Gopijanavallabha is even greater than the Gitacharya, because it is in that role that His infinite compassion and love are manifested to the fullest extent.

The word 'gopijana' should not be understood as encompassing only the female inhabitants of Gokula. Every sincere devotee who surrenders himself

or herself totally to the Lord is included in the term 'gopijana'. Swami Vivekananda says: "Gopileela is the acme of the religion of love, in which individuality vanishes and there is communion. It is in this leela that Sri Krishna shows what He teaches in the Bhagavadgita: "Give up everything for Me. Go and take shelter under Brindavanleela to understand Bhakti". Krishna, as the Gopijanavallabha, demonstrates to us by His own example and that of the gopis how we can actually translate into practice the teachings of the Gita.

Krishna's relationship with the gopis is very much misunderstood and consequently misinterpreted. To quote Swami Vivekananda again: "There are not wanting fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the marvelous significance of that most marvelous of all episodes. These are, let me repeat, impure fools, even born of our blood, who try to shrink from that as if from something impure. To them I have only one thing to say, 'First make yourselves pure'; and you must remember that he who tells the history of the love of the gopis is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Suka, the son of Vyasa. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is love of God impossible. Ay, forget first the love for gold and name and fame and for this little temporary world of ours. Then, only then, you will understand the love of the gopis, too holy to be attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with ideas of sex and money, and of fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart, daring to criticise and understand the love of the gopis! This is the very essence of the Krishna incarnation". (Sages of India).

The central teaching of the Gita is that we should give up our ego and perform all actions as an offering to the Lord, without any attachment to the fruit thereof. This is what was practiced by the gopikas. Sri Narayana Bhattatiri says in Sriman Narayaniyam, a condensed version of Srimad Bhagavatam: "While performing their household chores, the gopikas used to sing songs about Thee; all conversation among themselves was only about Thee; even in dream they would talk only about Thee. Almost all their actions were imitations of Thine. Seeing everything there thus identified with Thee, Uddhava was absolutely wonder-struck" (Srimannarayaniyam 76.8).

The gopikas had completed effaced their individuality and had identified themselves with Krishna. The butter which they lovingly offered to Krishna represents their heart. Butter is white and soft. Whiteness stands for purity. The implication of the offering of butter is that the gopikas surrendered their hearts, which were absolutely pure and soft, always melting in love for Krishna, to Krishna Himself. Sri Sankara says in Sivanandalahari that the only offering we can make to the supreme, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord is our hearts:"Thou holdest the golden mountain (Meru) in Thy hand (as a bow); Kubera, the Lord of wealth, is ever by Thy side; the wish-yielding tree,

Kalpakavriksha, the Kamadhenu and the gem which fulfils all desires, Chintamani, are all in Thy abode; the moon has its abode on Thy head; all auspiciousness abides at Thy feet. When this is so, what object of value can I offer unto Thee! Therefore, O Lord, let my mind be Thine (as that is the only thing I can dedicate to Thee)" (Sivanandalahari, 27).

The great sage Narada extols the devotion of the gopikas in the Narada Bhakti sutras. Narada defines Bhakti as 'supreme love of God'. Love of God becomes supreme only when (1) it is totally free from any selfish desire, (2) there is no place whatsoever for any love of a worldly nature in the mind, and (3) the devotee completely forgets himself or herself and sees only the object of his love, God, everywhere. All these are found in the love of the gopikas for Krishna. Narada says further in sutras 19 to 24:

Sutra 19: "The essential characteristics of Bhakti are the dedication of all activities to God and the feeling of extreme anguish if He is ever forgotten". Dedication of all actions to God, which is known as Karmayoga in the Gita, is thus an essential ingredient of Bhakti according to Narada. This, again, is what the gopikas were doing. Apart from representing their heart, butter has another significance too. It is the final product of all the labours of the gopikas. They milk their cows, turn the milk into curd, churn the curd and get butter. This butter, which is the essence of milk and which is the final product, is offered by them to Krishna. The anguish which the gopikas feel when they are separated from Krishna even for a very short period finds expression in the beautiful 'Gopikagitam' in chapter 31 of Skandha X of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Sutra 20: Examples of such perfect Bhakti do exist.

Sutra 21: Such indeed was the Bhakti of the gopikas of Vraja.

Sutra 22: It cannot be said that they were ignorant of the fact that Krishna was the supreme Lord Himself.

It is made very clear in the Gopikagitam in Srimad Bhagavatam that the gopikas knew that Krishna was the supreme Being Himself: "You (Krishna) are not just the son of Yasoda; you are the Indweller of all and the witness of all minds" (Bh.X.31.4).

Sutra 23: If they did not have this knowledge, their love would have been nothing more than the base passion of a mistress for her paramour.

Sutra 24: In such profane love the mistress is not at all interested in the happiness of her paramour. Such a love is purely selfish. But in the love of the gopikas there was no selfishness at all.

Thus Narada considers the gopikas to be the best exemplars of supreme devotion, or parabhakti.

The gopikas practiced Karmayoga by dedicating all their actions to Krishna. They had intense devotion to Krishna. They knew that the same supreme Being indwells all creatures and is the witness of all their actions. Thus we see in the gopikas the synthesis of all the three yogas, which is the essence of the Bhagavadgita.

It is thus clear that what was taught by Krishna in the Gita was actually demonstrated in their lives by the gopikas.

7. Vishayananda to Brahmananda

Every human being has desires, but the desires vary from person to person and from time to time for the same person. Some desire wealth, some fame, some power; one who has no children wants children, a bachelor wants to get married, and so on. But if these persons are asked why they desire all these, the answer will invariably be that they expect to get happiness by the fulfillment of their desires. So it is clear that what every human being wants is happiness, and each one has his own notion of what will bring him or her that happiness. Thus it is happiness alone that is desired for its own sake, and everything else is desired only for the sake of happiness. In Vedanta all objects of desire are denoted by the word 'Vishaya'. This noun is derived from the verbal root 'si' with prefix 'vi' which means 'to bind'. This very derivation indicates that it is these objects of desire that bind a human being firmly to transmigratory existence characterised by repeated births and deaths. The happiness experienced on the attainment of any object of desire is known as 'Vishayananda'.

'Brahmananda' is the bliss which is the very nature of the person who has realised that he is Brahman. This realisation is the consequence of the removal of the wrong identification with the body, and mind, which is natural to every living creature. Brahman being Bliss itself, one who has realised that he is Brahman remains as that very Bliss. Though Bliss is the real nature of every human being, it is only the realised soul who is aware of it.

All desires spring from identification with the body and mind, because the happiness looked forward to by the fulfillment of desires is to be enjoyed by the body and the mind. Thus Vishayananda, or the happiness arising from objects, has, as its basis, identification with the body and mind. On the other hand, Brahmananda is the consequence of the removal of this identification. These two thus appear to be diametrically opposed to each other. However, paradoxically, as it may seem, Swami Vidyaranya says in Panchadasi (XV.1) that Vishayananda is the door to Brahmananda and is an aspect of it. We shall see how this is so.

Desires and their effect on man
When a person intensely desires something, his mind remains obsessed by that desire. He is full of anxiety about the fulfillment of that desire and fears about obstacles cropping up. In such a state of mental agitation he is very miserable. If he fails in his effort he becomes even more unhappy. His mind becomes filled with anger and hatred against those whom he considers, rightly or wrongly, to have been responsible for his failure. He becomes dejected and despondent. There cannot be even the slightest trace of happiness when the mind is in such a state.

When and how happiness arises
If, on the other hand, the object desired is attained, then his mind becomes calm and remains so until another desire arises to disturb it. When the mind is calm, the bliss which is the real nature of every human being, becomes clearly reflected in it, just as the moon is clearly reflected in a pond in which the water is clear and not disturbed by the wind. When the mind is agitated by anxieties, fears and other such emotions, the reflection of bliss is indistinct like the reflection of the moon in a pond in which the water is muddy or disturbed by wind. Thus happiness is the result of the calming of the mind for the time being, but it is wrongly attributed to the attainment of the desired object.

Happiness does not come from objects
Objects have no capacity to produce happiness or unhappiness. The same object may give happiness to one person and unhappiness to another person. It is also every one's experience that the same object gives happiness at one time and unhappiness at another time to the same person. Warm clothing gives comfort in cold weather, but one cannot bear even the touch of it in a hot summer.

The mind is the cause of happiness and unhappiness
A person is happy when other living beings or inanimate objects are favorable to him, and unhappy when they are unfavorable. A thing or person is considered favourable when that thing or person responds in the way desired. If a son obeys his father, the father is happy; if he does not, the father is unhappy. A person is happy with his car or any other object as long as it functions well; if it does not, he is unhappy and wants to get rid of it. It is thus clear that happiness and unhappiness are only states of the mind, but are wrongly thought to be caused by external objects. Happiness is the result of the mind becoming calm. The mind becomes calm temporarily when a particular desire is fulfilled, and then happiness is experienced. But soon another desire crops up and agitates the mind, causing unhappiness. Thus it is clear that lasting happiness cannot be attained by the fulfillment of desires.

Detachment is the key to lasting happiness

True and lasting happiness can result only if the mind is permanently kept calm. This can be achieved only if desires, which are the cause of mental agitation, are completely eliminated. We are therefore led to the conclusion that total detachment towards all worldly pleasures (Vairagya) is the only means for the attainment of true and lasting happiness, which is Brahmananda.

Vairagya is the most essential requisite for a person who wishes to attain Self-knowledge, which alone will lead to eternal bliss. It is said by Sri Sankara that one who attempts to attain Self-knowledge without cultivating dispassion is like a person trying to cross a river on the back of a crocodile, mistaking it for a floating log of wood. He is sure to be eaten up by the crocodile midway.

It is now clear why Swami Vidyaranya says that Vishayananda is the door to, and an aspect of Brahmananda. Vishayananda is nothing but Brahmananda reflected in a calm mind.

Why the bliss aspect of Brahman is reflected only in a calm mind

Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The existence aspect alone is manifested in inanimate objects, but not consciousness and bliss. This is because inanimate objects have no subtle body which alone can reflect consciousness and bliss. The consciousness aspect is manifested in all animate beings, even when the mind is agitated, for we see that even a person who is unhappy is conscious. But the bliss aspect is manifested only when the mind is calm. A doubt arises as to why, when Brahman has both the aspects of consciousness and bliss, only one of them, consciousness, is reflected in an agitated mind. When you look at the reflection of your face in a mirror, you find that the face in its entirety is reflected and not only some aspects of it. This doubt is answered by Swami Vidyaranya by giving two examples. When water is in contact with fire, only the heat aspect of fire is absorbed by the water and not the light of fire. But when a log of wood comes into contact with fire, it absorbs both the heat and the light aspects. The same is the case with the reflection of Brahman.

Vedanta Paribhasha of Dharmaraja Adhvarindra

A Summary
By S. N. Sastri

The Vedanta-Paribhasha is an epistemological work on Advaita Vedanta as interpreted by the Vivarana school of Prakasatma Yati, the commentator on Padmapada's Panchapadika. The author is believed to have lived in the seventeenth century in South India. In this work he has adopted the method and phraseology of Navya-Nyaya, introduced by Gangesa Upadhyaya in the fourteenth century.

(Epistemology is the study of the origin, nature and validity of knowledge).

The work begins with the following prayer:

I bow to that Supreme Self, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, by the manifestation of the nescience associated with which thep rojection of the elements and all things made up of the elements takes place.

The first six chapters are devoted to establishing the means of valid knowledge (pramanas) from the standpoint of Vedanta, refuting the other systems of philosophy, particularly Nyaya-Vaiseshika.

The pramanas according to the various systems

Charvakas - Only perception (Pratyaksha).

Buddhists and Vaiseshikas - Perception and Inference

(Pratyaksha and Anumana)

Sankhya and Yoga - Perception, Inference and Verbal testimony (Pratyaksha, Anumana and Sabda).

Nyaya - Perception, Inference, Verbal testimony and Comparison (Pratyaksha, Anumana, Sabda and Upamana).

Prabhakara Mimamsa - Perception, Inference, Verbal testimony, Comparison and Presumption (Pratyaksha, Anumana, Sabda, Upamana and Arthapatti).

Vedanta and Bhatta Mimamsa - Perception, Inference, Verbal testimony, Comparison, Presumption and Non-apprehension (Pratyaksha, Anumana,Sabda, Upamana, Arthapatti and Anupalabdhi).

The Naiyayikas include presumption under inference, but this is rejected by Vedanta on the ground that presumption is based on negative invariable concomitance (vyatireka-vyapti) which Vedanta does not admit, since Vedanta admits only affirmative inference.

Valid knowledge and its means

Valid knowledge (prama) is defined as that knowledge which has for its object something that is not already known and is uncontradicted (anadhigata-abaadhita-arthavishayaka-jnaanam). The qualification 'something that is not already known' is meant to exclude recollection. The word 'un-contradicted' excludes illusion or error, as when a rope is mistaken for a snake.

The Mimamsakas hold that time is also cognised through the organs of sense. Thus, when an object is seen, the cognition is connected with the moment when it is seen. As a result, when an object is seen continuously for several moments, the cognition at each moment is considered to be different from the cognition of the same object at the previous or next moment. In this view, the cognition at each moment is a new cognition and so the qualification 'something that is not already known' applies and the definition is applicable. According to Vedanta, however, a continuous cognition for several moments is one single cognition. The knowledge of a pot, for example, is Consciousness reflected in the mental modification (vritti) in the form of the pot and this is just one throughout the time the same pot continues to be seen. In this view also the definition applies.

Objection: According to Advaita Vedanta, all objects such as pot are unreal, being 'mithya', and so the knowledge of the pot is contradicted and it cannot be valid knowledge.

Answer: It is only after the realisation of Brahman that the pot is contradicted. In the above definition, 'uncontradicted' means 'not contradicted during the transmigratory state'.

Perception as a means of knowledge

Valid perceptual knowledge is nothing but Pure Consciousness.

Objection: Consciousness is without a beginning; i.e. it is eternal. So why should it need the eye, etc as an instrument to produce it?

Answer: Although Consciousness is eternal, the vritti that reveals it arises only through the contact of the organ with the object. It is Consciousness reflected in the vritti that is spoken of as having a beginning. The vritti is figuratively designated as knowledge (though it is by itself insentient).

The mind is a substance with a beginning and so it has parts. The knowledge which is a mental modification (vritti) is an attribute of the mind, just as desire, etc are. See Br.up. 1.5.3-- "Desire, resolve, --- all these are but the mind".

Though desire, etc are attributes of the mind, they are wrongly thought to be attributes of the self, in the same way as it is said that a hot iron rod 'burns' when it is really the fire that burns. The false identification of the self with the mind is the reason for considering desire, happiness, etc as attributes of the self.

According to the author of Vedanta Paribhasha the mind is not an organ. (However, in the Bhashya on Brahmasutra, 2.4.17, Sri Sankara says:-- In the Smriti the organs are counted as eleven, and hence the mind also is accepted to be an organ like those of hearing, etc. The Smriti referred to here is Bhagavad gita, 13.5, second line. In the Bhashya on this it is said, "The five organs, ear etc., which are called the sense organs and the five organs which accomplish actions, and the mind, the eleventh". According to Vivarana, the mind is not an indriya, but according to Bhamati it is an indriya).
Objection: If the mind is not considered as an indriya, the perception of happiness, etc, which is produced by the mind, and not by any of the other sense-organ such as the eye, cannot be considered to be immediate (sakshat), because only perceptions produced by an indriya can be accepted as immediate.

Answer: No, because the immediacy of knowledge does not depend on its being produced by an indriya. If it is contended that only knowledge produced by an indriya is immediate, it would mean that God's knowledge, which is not produced by any indriya, is not immediate, and God would never have any perceptual knowledge. On the other hand, if all knowledge produced by an indriya is considered as immediate, and the mind is considered as an indriya, then inference, which is produced by the mind, would also have to be accepted as immediate, which is not acceptable to any one.

What is perceptual knowledge?

Perceptual knowledge (pratyaksha jnanam) arises when the Consciousness limited by the mental mode (pramana chaitanyam) coincides with the Consciousness limited by the object. In perception the Consciousness becomes three fold-- (1) Consciousness limited by the object (prameya-chaitanyam), (2) Consciousness limited by the mental mode (vritti) (pramana-chaitanyam) and (3) Consciousness limited by the mind (pramatr-chaitanyam).

The process of visual perception, according to Advaita Vedanta , is described in chapter 1 of Vedanta Paribhashathus. Just as the water in a tank, issuing through a hole, enters, through a channel, a number of fields and assumes the shapes of those fields, so also the luminous mind, stretching out through the eye, goes to the space occupied by objects and becomes modified into the forms of those objects. Such a modification is called a vritti of the mind. The same fact is also stated in Panchadasi, 4.27, 28 and 29, based on Sri Sankara's Upadesasahasri, Metrical portion, chapter 14, verses 3 &4. The whole process of visual perception consists of the following steps:--

(1) The mind stretches out through the eye, reaches the object and takes the form of the object. This is called a vrtti or mode of the mind.

(2) The mental mode removes the veil of ignorance that hides the object.

(3) Consciousness underlying the object, being manifest through the mental mode, illumines the object.

(4) The mental mode associates the object-consciousness with the subject-consciousness.

(5) The subject perceives the object.

Consciousness manifest through the mental mode coincident with the object serves as the knowledge of the object. This is known as phala (fruit), being the resultant knowledge.

The mind has three main divisions in this process, namely,

(1) the part within the body,

(2) the part that extends from the body to the object perceived,

(3) the part that coincides with the object.
The first part above is known as pramaataa and the consciousness manifest in it is called pramaata-chaitanya. This is the perceiver. The consciousness manifest in the second part is called pramaana-chaitanya,or the means of knowledge. The consciousness manifest in the third partis pramiti-chaitanya or percept.

The object perceived is called prameya. Since the third part of the mind mentioned above coincides with the object, prameya-chaitanya, the consciousness underlying the object and pramiti-chaitanya become identical. The point to be kept in mind here is that all objects in this world are superimposed on Consciousness, i.e. Brahman. All objects are covered by a

veil of ignorance, which has to be removed for seeing the object. It is only consciousness that reveals the objects, since the objects themselves are non-luminous.

The object perceived is but the underlying consciousness manifest or appearing as such. It has no existence apart from the all-pervading Consciousness. That all-pervading Consciousness (Brahma-chaitanya) which underlies the object known, that is to say, to be known, becomes manifest as the object known".

(This matter is dealt with in great detail in Panchadasi, chapter VIII- Kutastha dipa.)

In the case of feelings such as happiness, since the Consciousness limited by happiness, etc., coincides with the Consciousness limited by the vritti in the form of happiness, the knowledge in the form "I am happy' is also a perception (pratyakshajnanam).

Objection: In that case, recollection of past happiness would also have to be considered as pratyaksha.

Answer: No; the two limiting adjuncts, the vritti in the form of recollection and the vritti in the form of past happiness, belong to different times and so they cannot coincide. The criterion is that the two limiting adjuncts must occupy the same space at the same time.

Though punya and papa are also attributes of the mind, they are, by nature, incapable of being perceived. Capability of being perceived is another criterion.

The knowledge in the form 'the hill has fire' is pratyaksha in respect of the hill and anumana in respect of fire. Knowledge such as 'this is a fragrant piece of sandal' is aparoksham (immediate) in respect of the sandal, but paroksham (mediate) in respect of the fragrance. According to Nyaya, such a knowledge is called jnanalakshana pratyaksha (See Bhasha-Pariccheda- sl. 65).

(Nyaya recognises ordinary (laukika) and extra-ordinary (alaukika) perception. Ordinary or laukika perception is of two kinds- (1) internal (maanasa), where the mind comes into contact with psychical states and processes like cognition, affection, conation, desire, pain, pleasure, aversion, etc; and (2) external perception in which the five external organs of sense come into contact with external objects.

Extra-ordinary oralaukika perception is of three kinds-- samanyalakshana, jnanalakshana and yogaja. The first is the perception of the universals.

Whenever we perceive a particular cow we first perceive the ‘universal cowness' inhering in it.

Jnanalakshana is the ‘complicated perception through association'. For example, I see a blooming rose at a distance and say, "I see a fragrant rose". Here the visual perception of the rose revives in memory, by association, the idea of fragrance, which was perceived in the past through the nose. It is perception revived in memory through the cognition (jnana) of the object in the past. Other examples are-‘the piece of sandalwood looks fragrant', ‘ice looks cold', etc. The theory of anyathakhyati is based on this kind of perception. Anyatha means ‘otherwise' and ‘elsewhere'. The shell and the silver are both separately real; only their synthesis is unreal. The shell is directly present as ‘this' while the silver exists elsewhere and is revived in memory through jnanalakshana perception.

Yogaja is the perception of all objects, past, present, etc, through yogic power.)

Ageneric attribute (jati) is a distinct category according to Nyaya and is defined as "that which is eternal and inherent in many things", for example, jarhood (ghatatva). Vedanta does not accept such generic attributes. According to Vedanta, jarhood is the sum total of the characteristics of a jar, which distinguishes it from other things. It is not eternal. These characteristics are just attributes.

According to Nyaya, inherence (samavaya) is eternal relation. It is the relation between the whole and parts, jati and vyakti, qualities or actions and the substances possessing them, and ultimate difference (visesha) and the eternal substances-- atoms, ether, time, space, etc. Vedanta denies inherence and substitutes tadatmya, or difference-cum- identity,

Knowledge that is limited by mental modifications in the form of particular objects is a perception in respect of such knowledge, when it is not different from the Consciousness limited by objects that are present and are capable of being apprehended by particular organs.

This is a comprehensive statement about the criterion of perceptuality of knowledge.

The perceptuality of objects

The perceptuality of objects such as a jar (which are superimposed on the Consciousness limited by them), consists in their not being different from the Consciousness associated with the subject (pramaata-chaitanyam).

But in the case of inference, etc, since the mind does not go out to the space covered by the fire, etc, the Consciousness limited by the fire is not one with the Consciousness associated with the subject, and therefore the existence of the fire, etc, is distinct from that of the subject. So the definition of perception does not wrongly extend to such cases.

In the case of an inference regarding righteousness and unrighteousness, though the Consciousness limited by them is not distinct from the Consciousness associated with the subject, they cannot become pratyaksha because they are not capable of being perceived.

Being cognised by the witness alone (kevalasakshi-vedyatvam) does not mean that they are objects of the witness without the presence of the mental modifications corresponding to them, but that they are objects of the witness without the activity of pramanas such as the sense-organs and inference. Hence Prakasatmayati has, in Vivarana, admitted a mental modification in the form of the ego-- ahamakara-vritti. So also, in the case of an illusory piece of silver, a vritti of nescience in the form of silver (rajata-akara-avidya-vritti) has been admitted in works such as Samkshepa-sariraka. The illusory silver is 'sakshi-bhasyam', cognised by the witness-self, since the mental modification is not of the vyavaharika mind, but is a vritti of avidya. (See page 22 of commentary by Abhyankar on Siddhantabindu). Thus, an object is said to be cognised by perception when it is capable of being perceived and is devoid of any existence apart from that of the Consciousness associated with the subject, which Consciousness has for its limiting adjunct a mental modification in the form of that object.

Samyoga - conjunction - when a sense-organ is in contact with a substance such as a pot. This is called samyoga in Nyaya also.

Samyukta-tadatmya- contact of organ with qualities and other attributes of substances, such as the colour of a pot. Here the organ is connected with the pot and the colour, according to Vedanta, is identical with the pot. This is called samyukta-samavaya in Nyaya.

Sound is a quality of ether and is therefore identical with it.

Sabdatva is identical with sound, which is identical with ether.

In Nyaya the conjunction of organs with objects which causes perception is of six kinds:--

Samyoga - contact of a pot by the eye.

Samyukta-samavaya - in the perception of colour of the pot.

Samyukta-samaveta-samavaya- the perception of the universal genus such as rupatva, colourness. In Vedanta this is called samyukta-abhinna-tadatmya.

Samavaya - the hearing of sound by the organ of hearing, which is the ether in the cavity of the ear. Sound is a quality of ether and quality and the qualified are connected by samavaya.

Samaveta-samavaya - the contact in cognising soundness.

Viseshana-viseshya-bhava-sannikarsha- the conjunction in the perception of negation, as in the cognition: ghata-abhavavad-bhutalam.

Vedanta denies the relation of viseshya-viseshana-bhava admitted by Nyaya, as in the sentence "The ground has no jar". For tadatmya Nyaya substitutes samavaya or inherence.

In Nyaya also, sound is a quality of ether. Since qualities in here in substances, they cannot be perceived apart from the latter, except in the case of sound, which, though a quality, is perceived by itself.

According to Bhatta Mimamsa, however, sound is a substance.

Savikalpaka-pratyaksham- determinate perception, is that knowledge which apprehends relatedness (of the substantive and the qualifying attribute) (vaisishtya), such as, "I know the jar". (Here there is the relation of subject and object). In Nyaya determinate perception is cognition which involves an attribute or an adjunct, such as "This is a Brahmana", "This is black", "This is a cook". See page 163 of A Primer of Indian Logic by Prof. S. Kuppuswami Sastri).

Nirvikalpaka-pratyaksha - indeterminate perception, is that knowledge that does not apprehend this relatedness; for example, knowledge arising from sentences like, "This is that Devadatta" or "Thou art That". In these cases the knowledge arises by ignoring the particular features of 'This' and 'Devadatta' or 'Thou' and 'That'. In Nyaya indeterminate perception is a cognition which does not involve any attribute or adjunct (prakara).

The criterion of perception is not the fact of its being due to an organ. The criterion is the fact of the Consciousness associated with the means of knowledge not being different from the Consciousness associated with the object, when the object is present and is capable of being perceived, i.e., the identity of pramana-chaitanya and prameya-chaitanya.

Hence the knowledge arising from the sentence "Thou art That" is pratyaksha, because the subject itself being the object, the condition about

the identity of the Consciousness limited by That and that limited by Thou is satisfied.

There is a difference between perceptuality of cognition and perceptuality of objects. In the inference, 'The hill has fire, because it has smoke', both the hill and the smoke are objects of perception, but not the fire, which is inferred. Hence, if the perception is considered only with regard to the objects, then the knowledge of the fire would not be a perception. But if perceptuality is considered in respect of the cognition, the cognition of fire is a case of perception, since all knowledge is perceptual in respect of itself in Vedanta.

Dream Perception

Consciousness, which is self-effulgent, is the sub-stratum of the chariot, etc, seen in dream. They are experienced as existent; hence it is Consciousness manifesting itself as Existence that is the substratum.

Some hold that the chariot, etc, seen in dream are direct transformations of Maya; others that they are its transformations through the medium of the mind.

Two fold destruction of effects

The destruction of an effect is of two kinds. In one the destruction is together with that of the material cause, and in the other the material cause remains intact. The first is nullification or badha and the second is cessationor nivrtti. The cause of the first is the realisation of the truth of the substratum, Brahman for, without that, nescience, which is the material cause, is not removed. The cause of the second is the rise of a contrary mental modification, or the removal of defects. Hence, although on waking up the world conjured up in dream may not be nullified, i.e., destroyed with its material cause, nescience, in the absence of realisation of Brahman, yet, like the cessation of a pot by the blow of a club, the cessation of the chariot seen in dream occurs as a result of a contrary cognition, or through the removal of the defect of sleep.

Thus, according to the view that the silver seen in a nacre is an effect of the subsidiary nescience abiding in the Consciousness limited by the nacre, there is nullification of the silver together with the nescience regarding the nacre by the knowledge that the apparent silver is only nacre. But according to the view that the silver is an effect of the primal nescience, since the latter is destroyed only by the realisation of Brahman, there is just a cessation of the silver through the knowledge that it is a nacre-- as in the case of the destruction of a pot through the blow of a club.

Perception through or without an organ

The perception of happiness, etc, is not due to an organ, since the mind is not considered as an organ. The nose, tongue and skin generate cognitions of smell, taste and touch, just remaining at their seats, while the eye and ear apprehend their objects by themselves reaching the spot occupied by the objects.

From Methods of Knowledge - p.112:

According to Nyaya, the cognition 'This is a jar is manifested by a subsequent reflective knowledge (anuvyavasaya) in the form of 'I have the knowledge of the jar'. But according to Bhatta Mimamsa, the knowledge of the jar is known by inference. When the jar is known it acquires the quality of 'knownness' (jnaatataa), which is observable. By perceiving this mark of 'knownness' in the jar one infers one's antecedent knowledge of the jar. Thus, while the jar is known directly, its knowledge is known indirectly, by inference. Both Bhatta and Nyaya hold the theory known as paratah-prakasa-vada, according to which the manifestation of a particular knowledge does not rest on itself, but on another knowledge.

Vedanta rejects both the above views. If knowledge is not self-manifest, if one knowledge depends on another for its manifestation, then the second would depend on a third, and so on, ad infinitum.

From Gangesa's Theory of Truth-- by Jitendranath Mohanty p. 3:

The theory of svatah- pramanya:

Advaita, and the Bhatta, Prabhakara and Misra Mimamsa.

Paratah-pramanya:

Bauddhas and Nyaya.

Svatah-prakasa

Advaita, Prabhakara Mimamsa and Bauddhas.

Paratah-prakasa

Misra and Bhatta Mimamsa and Nyaya.

Prakasa is concerned with the apprehension of the knowledge itself. It asks the question, how is the knowledge itself known? How do I know that I know?

Pramanya is about how a knowledge becomes true and how is its truth ascertained.

Inference

Inference or anumaana is defined as that cognition which presupposes some other cognition. It is knowledge which arises (anu) after another knowledge. It is mediate and indirect and arises through a mark, linga or hetu (middle term) which is invariably connected with the saadhya (the major term). Invariable concomitance (vyaapti) is the nerve of inference. The presence of the linga in the paksha (minor term) is called pakshadharmataa. The invariable association of the linga with the saadhya is called vyaapti.

According to Nyaya, anumaana (inference) is the efficient instrument (karana) of inferential knowledge (anumiti). Anumiti is knowledge that arises from paraamarsa. Paraamarsa is a complex cognition which arises from a combination of the knowledge of invariable concomitance (vyaaptijnaana) and that of the presence of the linga in the paksha -- technically known aspaksha dharmataa jnaana.

From 'A Primer of Indian Logic', page 194:

Paraamarsa is an indispensable antecedent and should, therefore, be treated as the cause of anumiti. It is contended by the Naiyayikas that, in the absence of such a paraamarsa, anumiti does not arise. Paraamarsa is also known as linga paraamarsa or tritiya linga paraamarsa (the third cognition of the reason). The cognition of the presence of the linga in the paksha may be said to be the first linga paraamarsa; the cognition of the invariable concomitance is the second. The complex cognition which arises from these two cognitions is the third.

The Mimamsakas and the Advaitins hold that the complex cognition called paraamarsa is not indispensable for anumiti, though it may actually arise just before anumiti in many cases. They therefore maintain that it would be necessary to treat anumiti as the effect of vyaapti jnaana and paksha dharmataa jnana and to exclude paraamarsa from the causal complement of anumiti.

From Methods of Knowledge, page 146:

According to Advaita, the instrument of inferential knowledge is the knowledge of invariable concomitance, the latent impression of which knowledge is the cause. As soon as a person who has gained from previous experience the knowledge of the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire sees smoke on a hill, the latent impression of this knowledge is

revived within him and immediately follows the conclusion, 'The hill has fire'. Hence the interposition of the third consideration of the mark is redundant.

Major term - saadhya - fire - probandum

Minor term - paksha - hill

Middle term - linga or hetu - smoke - probans

Anupaadhi in Nyaaya is an adventitious factor which is invariably concomitant with the probandum and not so with the probans. The relation of vyaapti embodied in the proposition--- "Wherever there is fire, there is smoke"-- is not a necessary and unconditioned relation and depends upon the association of fire with the adventitious contact of wet fuel with fire. Such an adventitious circumstance is called upaadhi. It is called upaadhi because its invariable concomitance with the probandum (fire) comes to be erroneously associated with the probans (smoke), just in the same way as the redness of a flower is erroneously associated with a crystal in its vicinity.

In a statement of vyaapti, the vyaapya (pervaded - smoke) should be first referred to and the vyaapaka (pervader - fire) should be the principal predicate.

Nyaya postulates five component parts in the syllogism:
Pratijnaa - The proposition

Hetu - reason

Udaaharana - example

Upanaya - application

Nigamana - conclusion.

According to Advaita Vedanta only the first three steps or the last three are necessary.

The Naiyayikas classify inference into three different types, as below:

Anvaya-vyatireki- in which the invariable concomitance can be either affirmative or negative, e.g. - 'Wherever there is smoke, there is fire, as in a kitchen', and, 'Where there is no fire, there is no smoke, as in a lake'.

Kevala-vyatireki - that which is based solely on negative invariable concomitance, e.g. - 'Whoever is not omniscient is not the creator'. The inference, 'God is omniscient, because He is the Creator' is based on this negative invariable concomitance. No knowledge of affirmative invariable concomitance is possible in this case, because the co-presence of Omniscience and Creatorship cannot be seen anywhere.

Kevala-anvayi- This is where the sadhya is present everywhere, e.g. - 'The jar is nameable, because it is knowable', because name ability (the thing inferred), is present everywhere. This inference is based solely on the affirmative invariable concomitance, namely, 'Whatever is knowable is nameable'. Here negative invariable concomitance is not possible.

The Advaitins, like the Mimamsakas, do not acknowledge negative invariable concomitance - kevala-vyatireki, because, according to them, knowledge of negative invariable concomitance is not possible without the knowledge of affirmative invariable concomitance. The conclusion derived from negative invariable concomitance is treated as arthaapatti. Both anvaya-vyatireki and kevala-vyatireki are rejected by them and only anvayi is accepted. This includes the type of inference designated as kevala-anvayi by the Naiyayikas. But Advaitins repudiate the latter term as too narrow.

In Vedanta, as in Nyaya, inference is twofold - that for oneself and that for others.

Inference for oneself:

The inferential knowledge, "The hill has fire", arises when one has knowledge of the reason (smoke) being present in the thing (hill) where something (fire) is to be inferred, in the form, "This has smoke", and there is awakening of the latent impression left by previous experience, in the form, "Smoke is a subordinate concomitant of fire". The knowledge "The hill has fire" is inferential only in respect of the fire, and not in respect of the hill, because the knowledge of the hill is a perception.

Inference for others:

This requires the help of syllogisms. The component parts of a syllogism have already been given above.

The three levels of reality

According to Advaita Vedanta there are three levels of reality- absolute (paaramaarthika), empirical (vyaavahaarika) and illusory (praatibhaasika). Brahman alone is absolute reality. Everything in the universe has only empirical reality, i.e. they are real only till the dawn of Self-knowledge. Things such the illusory snake appearing on rope, silver on shell, objects experienced in dream, have only illusory reality.

The unreality of the universe is inferred from the statements in the srutis that there is nothing other than Brahman.

Gods, Sages and Yajnas in Vedas

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

This work offers a bird's eye view on the Vedic gods, sages and the Yajnas that the sages prescribed.

Vedic Gods

Savitr: The word Savitr is derived from the root su, which means to stimulate. The God of Gaytri mantra, who has been meditated upon by millions for thousands of years is pre-eminently a golden deity whose car and its pole are golden. Shining with the rays of the sun, yellow-haired, Savitr raises up his light continually from the east. His ancient paths in the air are dustless and easy to traverse, and on them he protects his worshippers; for he conveys the departed spirit to where the righteous dwell. He removes evil dreams, and makes men sinless. He is also connected with the evening as well as the morning; for at his command night comes and he brings all beings to rest.

Savitr is often distinguished from Surya. In some passages, he is said to shine with the rays of the Sun, to impel the sun, or to declare men sinless to the sun. But in other passages it is hardly possible to keep the two deities apart.

Dyāvā-prthivi: Heaven and Earth are the most frequently named pair of deities in the Rigveda. They are also separately addressed as 'father' and 'mother', since they have made and sustain all creatures; they are also the parents of the gods. At the same time they are in different passages spoken of as themselves created by individual gods.

They never grow old. They are great and wide-extended; they are broad and vast abodes. They grant food and wealth, or bestow great fame and dominion. Sometimes moral qualities are attributed to them. They are wise and promote dharma. As father and mother they guard beings, and protect from disgrace and misfortune.

Rudra: Just like Visnu, Rudra occupies a subordinate position in the Rigveda. It was much later that he became quite prominent in his form as Shiva. The epics and the Puranas drew the character heavily from that of Rudra. The famous mantra traymbakam yajamahe used universally as prayer to Lord Shiva, comes in the Vedas itself.

Rudra has beautiful lips and wears braided hair. His colour is brown, his form is dazzling, he shines like the radiant sun, is arrayed with golden ornaments, and wears a glorious necklace, drives in a car, holds the thunderbolt in his arm, and discharges his lightning shaft from the sky; but he is usually said to be armed with a bow and arrows, which are strong and swift.

He is fierce and destructive, strongest of the strong, swift, unassailable, unsurpassed in might, young and unaging. He is easily invoked and auspicious (siva). He not only preserves from calamity, but bestows blessings. His healing powers are often mentioned; he has a thousand remedies, and is the greatest physician of physicians

Mitra: The association of Mitra with Varuna is so intimate that he practically has no individuality of his own. His very name means 'friend', or 'ally'. In the Persian religion 'Mithra' is a sun-god or a god of light specially connected with the sun. The dual invocation of Mitra-Varuna goes back to the Indo-Iranian period, for Ahura and Mithra are coupled in the Avesta. In the Brahmanas, Mitra is connected with day, and Varuna with night.
Uttering his voice, Mitra marshals men and watches the tillers with an unwinking eye. Like Varuna, he is upholder of laws, and Visnu takes his three steps by the laws of Mitra

Brihaspati: Brhiaspati is a purely Indian god, and is also called 'Brahmana pati'-- 'Lord of prayer'. Addressed as the father of the gods, he is said to have blown forth their births. Like Agni, he is the priest of the gods. He is the generator of all prayers, and without him sacrifice does not succeed. His song goes to heaven, and he is associated with singers. He is said to help and protect the pious man, to prolong life, and to remove disease.

In the later literature, he plays a very important role as the priest of gods, and tries to defeat the power of Shukracharya, the priest of the asuras.

Usas: Decked in gay attire like a dancer, clothed in light, Usha (early morning) appears in the east and unveils her charms. Rising resplendent as from a bath she comes with light, driving away the darkness and removing the black robe of night. She is young, being born again and again, though ancient. Shining with a uniform hue, she also wastes away the life of mortals.

She drives away evil dreams, evil spirits, and the hated darkness. She discloses the treasures concealed by darkness, and distributes them bountifully. She awakens every living being to motion. When Usas shines forth, the birds fly up from their nests and men seek nourishment. Day by day appearing at the appointed place, she never infringes the ordinance of nature and of the gods. She renders good service to the gods by awakening all worshippers and causing the sacrificial fires to be kindled.

Usas is closely associated with the Sun. Since she precedes the Sun, she is occasionally regarded as his mother. She is also called the sister, or the elder sister of Night and their names are often conjoined as a dual compound (usasa-nakta). As the sacrificial fire is kindled at dawn, Usas causes Agni to be kindled, and Agni goes to meet the shining Dawn as she approaches.

Usas brings the worshipper wealth and children, bestowing protection and long life.

Parjanya: The name literally means 'rain-cloud', but he is frequently described as a bull that quickens the plants and the earth. The shedding of rain is his most prominent characteristic. He flies around with a watery car, and loosens the water-skin. In this activity he is associated with thunder and lightning. He is in a special degree the producer and nourisher of vegetation, and by implication Earth is his wife.

Pusan: His individuality is vague, and his traits are scanty. He wears braided hair, a beard and carries a golden spear. His car is drawn by goats instead of horses. With his golden aerial ships, Pusan acts as the messenger of Surya. He sees all creatures clearly and at once. He also conducts the dead on the far-off path of the Fathers, is a guardian of roads, removing dangers out of the way, protects cattle and brings them home unhurt and driving back the lost.

Āpas: These are the waters who follow the path of the gods. The deification of the Waters is pre-Vedic, for they are invoked as apo in the Avesta also.

Indra, armed with the bolt, dug out a channel for them, so they never infringe his ordinances. They are celestial as well as terrestrial, and the sea is their goal. King Varuna moves in their midst, looking down on the truth and the falsehood of men. They are also mothers to Agni. They give their auspicious fluid like loving mothers, and they purify, carrying away defilement. They also cleanse moral guilt, the sins of violence, cursing, and lying.

Vísve devāh: The comprehensive group called Vísve devāh occupies an important position. Probably it is an artificial sacrificial group intended to include all the gods in order that none should be left out during sacrifices, or prayer.

Yama: Yama is the chief of all the dead whose last rites were performed according to Vedic rites. He is not expressly designated a god, but only a being who rules over the dead. His father is Vivasvat, and he is said to have chosen death of his own will to find out the path for many, to where the ancient Fathers passed away. Thus, death is the path of Yama.

As the first father of mankind and the first of those that died, Yama appears to have originally been regarded as a mortal who became the chief of the souls of the departed. He is associated with Varuna, Brihaspati, and especially Agni, the conductor of the dead, who is called his friend and his priest.

Yama dwells in the remote recess of the sky. In his abode, which is the home of the gods, he is surrounded by songs and the sound of the flute.The owl and the pigeon are mentioned as his messengers, but the two four-eyed, broad-nosed, bridled dogs, sons of Sarama are his regular emissaries. They guard the path along which the dead man hastens to join the Fathers who rejoice with Yama. They watch men and wander among the peoples as Yama's messengers, but not in a bad sense. Yama is invoked to lead his worshippers to the gods, and to prolong life.

Vāta: Vata's name is connected with forms of the root va, (blow), which is also used for the name of Vayu. Vata is the breath of the gods, and like Rudra he has a hand in healing and prolonging life. He has the treasure of immortality in his house. His activity is chiefly mentioned in connection with the thunderstorm.

Purusa: There are seven hymns dealing with the creation of the world as produced from some material. In the well-known Purusa sukta, the gods are the agents of creation, while the material out of which the world is made is the body of Purusa, the God. The act of creation is here treated as a sacrifice in which Purusa is the victim, whose body parts became the universe. The Vedas sprung from him, the animals and plants were born of him, and the castes of men came out of him.

Pitras: They are the blessed dead who dwell in the third heaven. The term as a rule applies to the first ancestors who followed the ancient paths.

The Pitaras are classed as higher, lower, and middle, as earlier and later, who though not always known to their descendants, are known to Agni. They receive oblations as their food and are entreated to hear, intercede for, and protect their worshippers, and besought not to injure their descendants for any sin humanly committed against them. They are invoked to give riches, children, and long life to their sons, who desire to be in their good graces.

The path trodden by the Fathers (pitr yāna) is different from that trodden by the gods (deva yāna).

Vedic Rishis

Vāchaspatyam, the ancient Sanskrit to Sanskrit dictionary, defines rishi as: rishati jnānena samsāra-pāram (one who reaches beyond this transmigratory world by means of spiritual knowledge). Etymogically, the word may also mean "to see" or "to realise" spiritual truths.

Going through the Vedas, we realise that it would have been impossible for an ordinary poet, or even an spiritual aspirant to have the wisdom that have been recorded in the Vedas. Commenting on the special attainments of the Vedic rishis, Max Muller said that "these sages climbed up to the heights where their lungs only could breathe, and where those of other beings would have burst." These greats followed reason and meditation wherever it led them, no matter at what cost. They just did not care if all their best beliefs were smashed, never cared for what society of them, or talked about them. That is how they became what they became.

Coming to more realistic plane, we find each hymn of the Rig Veda traditionally attributed to a specific rishi, and the "family books" (Rigveda: 2-7) are said to have been the spiritual wisdom received by the various families. The main families, listed by the number of verses ascribed to them are:

Angirasas: 3619 (especially Mandala 6); Kanvas: 1315 (especially Mandala 8); Vasishthas: 1267 (Mandala 7) ; Viswamitras: 983 (Mandala 3); Atris: 885 (Mandala 5); Bhrgus: 473; Kashyapas: 415 (part of Mandala 9); Grtsamadas: 401 (Mandala 2); Agastyas: 316; and Bharatas: 170.

Of these, three families stand out as connected with fire sacrifices: Angirasaa, Atharvan, and Bhrigu. As sages, they carried an aura around them, and were respected as divine, having humbled even the gods in their feud with them. Some other sages like Atri were deified to be made one of the seven sages of saptarshi mandala.

Manu, as a sage is the living equivalent of what is Yama for the dead. He is also the son of Vivasat, as Yama is, and is considered to be the progenitor of the human race. His name is connected more with the deluge during which the Lord came as Mina Avatara.

Viswamitra and Vasistha became more famous as the sage connected with the life of Sri Ramachandra. However, their feud and rivalry became so famous that these stories and their outcome have entered the Indian lore.

Not much is known about the Vedic sages other than what we get in the epics and the Puranas. The little that we gather about them from the later works makes us feel that they considered themselves mere instruments in receiving the divine wisdom and knowledge for the benefit of the mankind.

Despite their impersonal way of life in which rituals and meditation occupied their nearly whole of waking hours, they unknowingly left behind a way of life that was later on emulated by the Brahmins for centuries to come.

Rishikas -- The Female sages

We come across quite a few names of the rishikas (women Rishis) in the Vedas. Probably none of them was the composers of the Vedic mantras, but they were definitely samhitākartās, who assisted in the collection of the Veda mantras. Since the sages normally led a married life, and had children who grew up in the Vdic atmosphere, it was quite natural to have some great rishikas.

Some famous great female sages are: Maitreyi who was Yajnavalkya's wife; Gargi, who challenged Yajnavalkya with her sharp questions, Lopamudra (wife of Agastya), who has two mantras (RV I.179.1-2) attributed to her, Roamasa the wife of Svanya , Visvavara belonging to the Atri family, Aangirasi Sarasvati of Angirasa family, Apala of the Atri family, Yami Vaivasvati, Sraddha, Ghosha, Urvasi, Sarama, Poulomi, and others. Most of them are mentioned in the Rigveda.

Yajna: Vedic rites and sacrifices

Broadly speaking, religious acts of an individual, or of a group is yajna (religious sacrifice).

Under normal conditions, every act of a person is mundane, and at times, even profane. But when those very acts are performed with a religious outlook, they becomes yajna. Even the simple act of breathing can be transformed into a sacrifice (Gita, IV.29) when it is performed with proper attitude. Thus yajna (sacrifice) is the consecration of the mundane to the divine. It is the transformation of the profane into the sacred; is the bridge between the material and the spiritual; and is the instrument to convert the belittled to the exalted.

For a person to be spiritual, his acts have to be spiritualised, and for that every act of his has to become a yajna. That is why even the act of creation by Purusha (God) was perceived as a yajna by the Vedic sages, and was described so (Purusa Sukta, Rig Veda X. 90) . But, it is impossible for a common man to treat every act of his as a yajna, which means that an easier way has to be found for his upward journey towards spirituality.

It was to solve this problem that the Vedic sages came up with the solution of public and private yajna for all. Soon they had framed methods by which the life of an individual and the society could be regulated by sacrificial acts. In

birth, death, marriage, acquisition, renunciation, sorrow, joy, victory, loss -- there came up a yajna.

Slowly these yajnas diversified into sacraments (samskaras), and sacrifices (offerings and oblations). The sacraments for the individual's private life (like marriage, sacred thread ceremony, funeral rites etc.) grew up to forty in number, but was later brought down to eighteen, then to sixteen in the Smriti period, and finally to ten in the Tantra system. Most Hindus now follow these ten samskaras. A brief overview of the samskaras will be given in "An Overview of the Smritis " .

The yajna which were not sacramental (i.e. not a samskara) were characterised by offering of oblations to various deities and personalities. The oblations (haviH) meant for gods were poured as ahuti into fire, known as homa , whereas the offerings made to the ancestors and the demigods (Nirriti and the Rakshasas) were known as bali and were placed on the strewn grass, or put in water. These practises continue even today. It is believed that in the early days, even the offerings to gods were not made in the fire, but were placed on the ground, or strewn grass, but later on nearly all the offerings were made into fire (Agni got a severe stomach problem due to this, as narrated in Mahabharata).

Here we discuss only the fire sacrifices addressed to the gods.

The Vedic yajna are prayer to the divine in anticipation of something in which the offering (including the sacrificial goat) effects the communication between the mundane and the sacred; and the priest acts both as the agent of the sacrificer and the mouthpiece of the gods.

These fire sacrifices had: a) one single fire used in domestic rites, or b) three fires for bigger sacrifices. In case of the three fires, the most important fire used to be the Gārhapatya (of the master of the house), which descended from the domestic hearth of the sacrificer, and was kept perpetually burning. All oblations were cooked in this fire. To its east used to be Āhāvaniya fire, in which offerings were made. To the south of the Gārhapatya, the dakshina agni used to be set, in which the fire used to be brought at the end of a sacrifice.

The Vedic rites can be classified into two groups: Grihya (domestic) and Shrauta (public), which were characterised respectively by the absence and the presence of priests. Grihya sacrifices included the individual samskaras (purificatory sacraments), a daily sacrifice called mahayajna (great sacrifice), and seven pākajanya (cooked sacrifices).

The Shrauta sacrifices consisted of haviryajna, and Somayajna. The haviryajna were performed with grains, ghee, milk etc., whereas the Somayajna were performed with soma juice. These sacrifices were again categorised as nitya (daily), naimittika (occasional), kāmya (with a specific desire), and prāyaschitta (penance).

Some of the the famous Vedic rites are:

Agnihotra: This was the twice daily pouring (at sunrise and sunset) of oblation (mostly milk) in the sacrificial fire by the family. The ritual was performed by a priest for his own or the benefit of a sponsor (yajamāna). This sacrifice was considered purificatory in nature, and is still practised by some.

Darshapaurnamasa: This was performed on the new moon and the full moon days.

Agrāyana: This involved offering of newly produced grains in different seasons.

Chāturmāsya: These were the four monthly rites which used to be started in the beginning of any of the three seasons: spring, rainy, or the autumn.

Agnishtoma: It was performed annually in the spring season in the praise of Agni.

Pravargya: It was an oblation offered to Ashvins of goat's and cow's milk heated in a vessel.

Vājapeya: This was done to celebrate a great victory by the king. It lasted from 17 days to a year.

Rājasuya: It was the consecration of a famous king in which great expenses were made. In the Mahabharata period Yuddhisthira performed this yajna.

Aswamedha: This was a complex sacrifice marked to prove the sovereignty of a king. After the sacrifice, the king was known as Chakravarty. Raja Ramachandra had performed this yajna.

Sarvamedha: It was a ten day sacrifice, in which a person sacrificed everything he had. It was performed for the sake of gaining and winning every kind of food, and attaining supremacy.

Prayer

Along with the growth and consolidation of the yajnas, prayer to the divine also grew in importance. In the Vedas prayers are linked with the sacrifices in the form of a formula (yajus), pronounced in a low voice. There were also declamations of verses, called shastras, in which 'Aum' was inserted at regular interval.

References are also made in the Vedas to an 'internal' mental sacrifice which can be used in cases of urgency. The part played by thought, side by side with word and action is emphasised many times in various hymns. Later on this concept was taken up by various religious systems as manasā- vācā - karmanā, and a devotee was advised to offer all his acts of thinking, speaking, and doing to the Lord.

Although prayer played an integral role in any sacrifice, with time it grew independent of the yajna. The independence and the autonomy of prayer ensured its own dynamics, and it soon became powerful enough to overthrow the role of sacrifices in a spiritual life altogether. When the scholars try to present Upanisahdic thoughts as a revolt of the Kshatriyas against the Brahmins, they overlook the fact that the Upanishads are the natural outcome of the power of prayer to the Self. Any open religious system is sure to reach the state where prayer becomes the essential part of its outlook. Prayers are a kind of paradigm shift in spirituality -- a fact that was recognised and practised by the Vedic sages more than five thousand years ago.

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Sections of the Vedas

Brāhmanas

The discussion till now has been on the Samhitā portion of the Vedas. As mentioned earlier, the Vedas have three more sections: Brāhmana, Āranyaka, and Upanishads. Of these, the Upanishads continue to influence the lives and philosophy of the Hindus, but the other two reached a dead end long ago, after giving birth to more specialised branches of religion connected with the issues discussed in them.

Commenting on Taittiriya Samhita 1.2.1, Bhatta Bhaskara defines ‘Brahmanas’ as texts which expound the Vedic mantras and Yajnas. In chapter 2 of his Kavyamimansa, Rajasekhar defines the Brahmanas as texts which are characterised by statements of eulogy, censure, exposition and (ritual) application (of mantras). The word is used distinctively to denote certain texts for the first time in Taittiriya Samhita 3.7.1.1

Many scholars, modern and ancient, have tried to define the Brahmanas by stating their characteristics. The reality however is that there is no sharp difference in the character of the Mantra and the Brahmana portions of the Vedas. The only thing that we may state safely is this – Mantras are those portions of the Vedas that are designated as such traditionally. And the rest is Brahmana.

Vedic sages felt that there was nothing that could not be achieved by sacrifices – the sun could be stopped from rising, and Indra, the chief of gods, could be deposed from his throne. The Samhitā contain the mantras that are required in various sacrifices, but the methodology and the science of the rituals and sacrifices required a separate kind of work.

With the growth of Samhitā literature, the corresponding science of performing the yajna also increased in bulk. With time, these were collected in a special class of literature which was known as Brāhmana. The formulas and rules for conducting extremely complex rituals are explained to the minutest detail in these works, and, every ritual is performed with a specific purpose, for which a specific result is described. Thus, for each Samhitā, there were a number of Brāhmana, which are treated as the Veda itself. Unlike the Samhitā, the Brāhmana are exclusive prose works, although some are accented.

In addition to these, the Brāhmanas also contain myths, legends, and narratives to explain or rationalise the then religious practices. The duties of men professing different occupations, the eternity of the Veda, popular customs, cosmogony, historical details, praise of ancient heroes are some other subjects dealt with in the Brahmanas. The later philosophical speculations concerning the Self were also a part of the Brāhmana, but later it broke free to become a separate section.
Thus, the Brāhmana literature can be classified under three sections:
1. vidhi, which are the practical sacrificial directions
2. arthavāda, (eulogy) which are the explanations of meanings and purpose of the sacrifices
3. upanishads, the later philosophical developments which focus on "I am That."

The staunch traditionalists, however, accept only vidhi and arthavada as the Vedas.

As in the case of Samhitā, a major portion of the Brāhmana literature has been lost, but what has reached our hands, forms an extensive literature.

The Brāhmana are indispensable if one wants to understand the later religious and philosophical literature of Hinduism. These works are also important to understand the history, science, and growth of priesthood and sacrifices. Most of the beliefs practised in modern Hinduism has been adapted from these works.

The famous Brāhmanas:

Rig Veda
* Aitareya Brāhmana: It deals with Soma sacrifices, Agnihotra, and Rajasuya yajna.
* Kausîtaki/Sānkhāyana Brāhmana: It deals with Soma sacrifices and the food sacrifices.

Samaveda
* Tāndya Maha Brāhmana/ Panchavimsa: It contains some very old legends and the details of a sacrificial ceremony (Vrātyastomas) by which Vrātyas (total outcastes) were received in the Brahiminical fold.
* Sadvimsa Brāhmana: It deals with miracles and omens
* Jaiminîya Brāhmana: It has legends and the history of religion
* Chāndogya Brāhmana: The first two 'lessons' deal with ceremonies relating to birth and marriage; whereas the last eight 'lessons' constitute the famous Chāndogya Upanishad.
* Sāmvidhāna, Devatādhyana, Vamsha, Samhitopanisat Brahmans: These four Brāhmanas are very short, and are not really treated as Brāhmana.
* Sātyāyana Brāhmana: It is only found in quotations of Sayanacharya.

Krishna Yajurveda
* Taittiriya Brāhmana: This Brāhmana is in addition to the commentary already interspersed in the Samhitā. It also contains Kāthaka portion of Brāhmana, which otherwise is considered lost. The text details various sacrifices and also narrates some legends.

Shukla Yajurveda
* Shatapatha Brāhmana: It is in a hundred chapters, and is the most extensive and the most important of all the available Brāhmanas. It has tow recension -- Kānva, and the Mādhyandina. The work deals with sacrificial matters, sacred thread ceremony, svādhyāya (self study of scriptures), and some special sacrifices like Asvamedha.

Atharva Veda
* Gopatha Brāhmana: This is the only available Brāhmana of the Atharvaveda. In this work we have Upanishad texts like the Pranava Upanishad.

Evolution of the religious ideal in the Brāhmana:

Japa: The rationale of the sacrifices were discussed threadbare in the Brāhmana, but that did not satisfy every mind. Questions were raised against sacrifices and their methodology. Even gods themselves started becoming redundant. And with all this kind of mental activity poured into the analysis of the rites and their explanation, abstractions were increasing rapidly in the Vedic religion.

As the sacrifices were glorified and given power even over the Vedic gods, the power of the word increased. Japa (the practice of chanting a mantra silently) of 'Aum' practised ascetically with the sacrifices was believed to produce all one's desires. At the same time knowledge was beginning to be valued. In one exchange mind says that speech merely imitates it, but speech emphasises the importance of expression and communication; however, Prajapati decides that mind is more important than the word.

In the long run, the sacrifices went away, the gods went away, prayers and chant went away. What remained was only japam of the sacred 'Aum'. Later, this was also given up to pave way for meditation.

Tapasyā: Prajapati was the father of both the gods and the demons. The ethical principle of truth became stronger as the gods were described as truthful and the demons as not so truthful. However, realising the ways of the world, many complained that the demons grew strong and rich (as people complain even today of those who become successful by taking the wrong path). Instead of telling that the demons would perish due to their own karma, emphasis was laid on the power of goodness. The gods were advised to perform sacrifice, or perish. The gods performed sacrifices that made them triumph over the demons, and also helped them attain Truth.

To emphasise the power of tapas and sacrifice, it was said that Prajapati practised tapas to create the world by the heat of his own tapasya. Prajapati not only created, but also entered into things as form and name, giving them order. In the later literature, Prajapati was replaced by Brahma, who was identified with Truth and became the Creator God in the trinity that included Vishnu and Shiva.

Self Analysis: A judgement after death using a scale to weigh good against evil is described in the Satapatha Brāhmana. The text recommends that the one who knows this will balance one's actions in this world so that in the next the good deeds will rise, not the evil ones. This concept, however, underwent a great change in later times, and spiritual aspirants were advised to discriminate between the Real and the unreal to attain spiritual wisdom.

Rebirth: Belief in repeated lives through reincarnation is indicated in several passages in the Brāhmanas. A beef-eater is punished by being born as a strange and sinful creature. However, as knowledge rivalled the value of ritual, this new problem of how to escape from an endless cycle of rebirth presented itself automatically, which led to the more abstract philosophy of the Upanishads.

A few Selections from the Brāhmana

** Bhrigu, the son of Varuna was devoted to learning. Unfortunately his learning made him egotistic and he thought that he was superior to all, including the gods and his own father. So Varuna decided to make him grow in humility, and had his life breath stopped. This made Bhrigu enter the worlds of death. In the first he saw someone cut another man to pieces and eat him; in the second, one man was eating another who was screaming, and in the third a man was silently screaming. In another world there were two women guarding a treasure, and at one place a stream of blood was guarded by a naked black man with a club, while a stream of butter provided all the desires of golden men in golden bowls. In the sixth world five rivers of blue and white lotuses were flowing. There also was the river of honey, wonderful music, celestial nymphs dancing and singing, and a fragrance enveloping the whole region.

When Bhrigu returned, his father explained to him that the first man represented people who in ignorance destroyed trees, which in turn ate them; the second were those who cooked animals that cried out and in the other world were eaten by them in return; the third were those who ignorantly cooked rice and barley, which screamed silently and also ate them in return; the two women were Faith and non-Faith; the river of blood represented those who squeezed the blood out of a Brahmin, and the naked black man guarding the river was Anger; but the true sacrificers were the golden men, who got the river of butter and the paradise of the five rivers. -- Satpatha Brahmana XI.6.1

** "Prajapati alone existed before this Universe came into being. The word certainly was his only possession. Therefore, the word was the second. He desired: 'Let me emit this very word, it will pervade this whole (space). He emitted the word and it pervaded the whole (space). It rose upwards and spread, as a continuous (well joined) stream of water." -- Tāndya Brāhmana 20.14.2

** "Some ask- 'If a man establishes the sacrificial fire and then dies while touring abroad, then how does one do his Agnihotra? To this, we reply that it is to be performed by offering the oblation of the milk of a cow which has been suckled by a calf that is not its own. This is because the milk of such a

cow is akin in nature to the Agnihotra of such a dead man. Alternately, perform the Agnihotra with the milk of any cow. Others state the relatives of the dead man should keep the alters of that man fired up without offering sacrificial oblations till the bones of the dead man have been collected after cremation of his corpse. And if the corpse is not traceable, then twigs from 360 ‘flame of the forest’ trees should be cut and fashioned into a human figure. This should then be cremated with full ceremony and at that time, the fires from the altar established by the dead man should be extinguished by a transfer to his funeral pyre. The likeness of the corpse should be created in this manner- 150 twigs for the torso, 140 for the twigs for the two thighs. 50 for the legs and the rest should be placed above its head. Thus ends the procedure for the atonement performed for a man who establishes a sacrificial fire in the altar but dies while touring abroad.”
-- Aitareya Brāhmana XXXII.1-2

Āranyakas

As appendices to nearly all the Brāhmanas are the texts known as Āranyakas (lit. forest texts). The main content of these texts are the mysticism and symbolism of sacrifice and priestly philosophy. In turn these Āranyakas end in the Upanishads. Although the very orthodox Vedic schools did not give much importance to the Āranyakas and the Upanishads, these are extremely important for the Vedanta philosophy. The Vedantins do not see Upanishads as the end of the Vedas, but as the final aim of the Vedas.
The Aranyakas were called the forest texts because the ascetics who taught them used to retreat into the forest, and the disciples used to follow them there. This resulted in a loss of emphasis on the sacrificial rites that were performed in the villages and the towns. It is believed that these texts were for the Vānaprasthis (those who had completed their worldly duties and renounced them), who were supposed to meditate on the mystical significance of the sacrifices only. Thus the Aranyakas were the transitional link between the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads; they discussed rites, had magical content, lists of formulas and the hymns from the Vedas, but also had the early speculations and intellectual discussions that finally flowered in the Upanishads.

The Taittiriya Aranyaka tells how when some great sages were approached by some ordinary sages for instruction, they refused. But when the sages came back with faith and tapas, they were instructed.

The sense of social morality also started growing: truth was considered to be the highest value, debtors were in fear of punishment in hell, and immorality was condemned.

The emphasis now was on spiritual knowledge. The concept of prana as the life energy of the breath was exalted and was declared to be present in trees, animals, and people in ascending order. Human immortality was identified with the atman, and not with the body. Hell was still feared, but it was believed that by practising tapasya,one could hope to be born in a better world after death or be liberated from rebirth. Non-attachment (Vairagya) was also declared to be the great purifier of the body and the liberator from the cycle of life and death.

Brahman, the Supreme Reality, and Atman, the individual's essence, were now more important than gods and sacrifices. The guardians of the spiritual treasures of the community were called Brahmavadins (those who discussed Brahman).

<u>The Various Āranyakas</u>
Rig Veda: Aitaraya, Kaushitaki or Shānkhyāyana
Krishna Yajurveda: Taitttiriya, Maitrāyani,
Shukla Yajurveda: Brihadaranyaka (two recensions)
Samaveda: Chhandogya, Jaiminiya

A few Selections from the Aranyaka

"They said: 'Sir, you are the teacher, you are the teacher. What has been said has been duly fixed in mind by us. Now answer a further question. Fire, air, Aditya (sun), time, prana, food, Brahma, Rudra, Vishnu- some meditate upon one, some meditate upon another. Tell us- which one is the best for us?' Then he replied to them: "All these are merely the manifest forms of Brahman, the Immmortal, the Formless. To whichever form each man is devoted here, in the realm of that deity does that man rejoice. For it has been said- 'This whole is Brahman (Brahma khalvidam vāv sarvam). These, which are its manifest forms that one meditates on, worships and finally discards. For, by meditation upon these forms, one moves to higher and higher realms, and when all things perish, one attains unity with the Purusha!" -- Maitrayani Aranyaka

'He by Whom all this Universe is pervaded-- the earth and the mid region, the heaven and the quarters and the sub-quarters, that Purusha is fivefold and is constituted of 5 elements. He who has attained the Supreme Knowledge through Sannyāsa (renunciation) is indeed this Purusha. He is all that is in the present, was in the past and will be in the future. Though apparently human, his true nature is that which is settled by the Vedas and what is attained by his new birth is in right knowledge. He is firmly established in the richness of knowledge imparted by his teacher, as also in his faith and in Truth. He has become the self resplendent. Being such a one, He remains beyond the darkness of ignorance. O Aruni! Having become one possessed of

knowledge by realising Him, the Supreme, through sannyasa, and with your mind fixed in your heart, do not again fall a prey to death, because sannyasa is the supreme means of spiritual realisation, therefore wise men declare that to be above all the means of liberation.' -- Taittiriya Aranyaka, X.79

'Thereafter, when the body is made fit for a state of desirelessness, he should be bent over the offering to Brahman. In this way, he will drive repeated deaths away. “The Soul is to be envisioned, to be heard, to be thought of and to be meditated upon.” “Him (the Soul) they aspire to know by reciting the Vedas, by practicing the rigors of studentship (including celibacy), by asceticism, by faith, by ritual sacrifices and by fasting” says Sage Mandukeya. “Therefore, he who knows this should, becoming tranquil, restrained (in senses), still in meditation, enduring of the opposites and immersed in faith, perceive the Soul in his own soul,” thus says Sage Madavya. That Purusha, who lives in the midst of life forces, and is a repository of consciousness, is incomprehensible and ought to be distinguished (form the animate and inanimate creation) as ‘Not this, Not this’.” “This Soul alone is the Kshatriya, it is the Brahminhood, it is all the divine beings, the Vedas, all the worlds, it is all beings, indeed it is all! This Soul is that is designated by ‘Tat tvam asi’ (That Thou are). This Soul is to be comprehended in ‘I am Brahman’. This Brahman (the Supreme Soul), without any predecessor, without any superior, without another equivalent, immanent in all, without an exterior (i.e. all pervading), is this Soul-- the Brahman (the Supreme Being), the entity that experiences everything in the Universe-- such is the doctrine”- says Sage Yajnavalkya. ' --- Shānkhyāyana Aranyaka

The Upanishads

There are as many Upanishads to each Veda as there are Sakhas, branches or recension, i.e., 21, 102 (according to some, 109), 1000 and 50 respectively to the four Vedas (The Rig-Veda, The Yajur-Veda, The Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda). However, just like the lost recension, the corresponding Upanishads are also lost.

According to various sources, there are different number of important Upanishads, but Acharya Shankara has commented upon eleven: Isa, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Mandukya, Prasna, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, and Svetasvatara. There are some upanishads coming from very old times other than these, but nearly all of the other upanishads (including Allahopanishad) is a later addition. These later works claim to belong to the lost portions of the Vedas, which can neither be proved nor disproved.

The fundamental principle governing the Upanishads is the great spiritual realisation that "Atman is Brahman" -- the individual is one with the Universal.

Because of their importance and vastness, the Upanishads will be discussed in a separate section.

The Vedangas

From the aspect of the spiritual tradition, the Vedangas do not have much importance, because they act as auxiliaries to the Vedas. These subjects of study were quite important for the performance of Vedic rites and sacrifices, but they had no direct role in the spiritual life of a person. In later times, the evolved branches of these Vedangas were taken up by the greats of their fields and made into a complete shastra, which when followed devotedly, could take one to the realisation of the Supreme Rality.

There are six Angas or explanatory limbs, to the Vedas: Sikshā (Phonetics), Vyakarana (Grammar), Chhanda (Prosody metre), Nirukta (etymology), Jyotisha (Astronomy and astrology), Kalpa (Srauta, Grihya, Dharma and Sulba).

Sikshā: In the Taittiriya Upanishad there is the famous mantra: " Aum. We will expound siksha, or the science of pronunciation. It deals with sound, pitch, quantity, force, modulation and combination. Thus is explained the lesson on pronunciation."

As mentioned in the above Upanishad, Sikshā was the science of pronunciation. The oldest phonetics textbooks are the Prātishakyas that describe pronunciation and intonation as well as the rules of sandhi of the vedic Sanskrit. These books were specific to the individual Shakhas of the Vedas. With time, more popular versions of these Prātishakhya came into existence which were known as siksha.

The importance of the study of this branch of study has been beautifully stressed in a popular story (Taittiriya Samhitā, 2.4.12): Tvasta, the divine carpenter wanted to take a revenge on Indra, and hence conducted a yajna to beget a son who would destroy Indra. When he chanted the mantra, 'Indrasatur varddhasva...' , he went wrong in intonation: he was supposed to pronounce "indra" without raising or lowering the syllables in it, whereas "tru" and "rddha" should have been raised (udatta). Had Tvasta pronounced correctly, it would have meant 'May Tvasta's son grow to be the slayer of Indra'. Unfortunately because of the wrong intonation, the mantra now meant, 'May Indra grow to be killer of this son (of mine).' Consequently, Tvasta's son was killed by Indra, although there was no change in the wordings of the mantra, only the change in the stress of the letters caused this havoc.

Vyākarana: The Vedic grammar is lost forever but the remnant of it can be found in the works of Panini's grammar.

Chhandas: This the science of prosody. There are very few books left on this subject, that too of very late origin. Sutras of Pingala on metrics is one of the more famous one, but this was also recorded much after the Vedic period.

Chhandas expound the 'metres of the gods', the 'metres of Asuras' etc., and treat the seven famous metres of the Vedas, along with the other complex metres. Reflections on the names and forms of metres, and the mysticism of the syllable and of the verse were developed to an extraordinary extent in the hymns of the Samhitā, and also the Brāhmanas.

Nirukta: This Vedanga is the philosophy of etymology, but deals exclusively with the words of Rig veda. Yaska's Nirukta is the only famous work that has come down to us, which in itself is the commentary of an earlier work, Nighantu. It is in the form of explanations of words, and is the basis for later lexicons and dictionaries.

Jyotisha: The importance of the Vedic sacrifices necessitated the drawing up of the calendar for rituals and fix the proper times for the sacrifices. This meant that the sages had to study the movements of the planets and observe the celestial phenomena in detail. It was thus that the science of astronomy and astrology came up in India.

Kalpa: It is the description of the methodology of ritual. To help the priests perform the various details connected with a sacrifice, a kind of manual was worked out. With time every Veda had its own handbook (written in short form, known as sutra) of rituals, which came to be known as Kalpa. Thus the Shrauta Sutras (dealing with public sacrifices), Grihya Sutras which concern domestic life and the Dharma Sutras which deal with ethics, customs and laws -- all belong to Kalpa. The Sulba, which treat of the measurements necessary for laying out the sacrificial area, also belong to Kalpa.

Among the Kalpa Sutras, the works of Asvalayana, Sankhayana, Gobhila, Katyayana, Apastamba, Hiranyakesi, Bodhayana, Bharadvaja are more famous.

In later times, the Kalpa evolved into Smriti literature of law books, of which Manusmriti became the most famous.

Conclusion

The Hindus consider the Vedas to be synonymous with knowledge. However, even a brief survey of the Vedas, as presented in this short monograph, is

enough to make one realise that the Vedas (which include the rituals, the code of conduct, mythologies, and the philosophy of Vedanta) are synonymous with religion. Whatever principle or practice is there in the religious world can be found in the Vedas, although not every religion can be traced to it. Swami Vivekananda says, '.. the Vedanta, applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism. The first stage, i.e. Dvaita, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe, is Christianity; as applied to the Semitic groups, Mohammedanism. The Advaita, as applied in its Yoga-perception form, is Buddhism etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta; the applications must vary according to the different needs, surroundings, and other circumstances of different nations.'

The spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna have once again proved that the Vedas are infallible. The experiences portrayed in many of the hymns of the Vedas were thought to be poetic in nature by the scholars, but Sri Ramakrishna had those experiences even before he knew of the existence of such Vedic passages.

It is wrong to search for any kind of religious evolution in the Vedas; the ideas are as they are. The Vedic sages meditated upon the various aspects of the external and the internal nature to come up with the ultimate spiritual solution to the enigmas that presented themselves to these sages. Naturally it is impossible to say which of these enigmas were more advanced in nature when they came to the sages. Further, if it be accepted that the Vedas are the revelations received in the transcendental state of a pure mind, then it would be wrong to conclude that there can be any evolution in it. It would be more like concluding that the words of Sri Ramakrishna are later than the words of a novice of the twenty-first century, simply because Sri Ramakrishna's words are spiritually more perfect. So, one must accept the Vedas as they are.

Every student of religion and every devout Hindu has to go back to the Vedas if he wants to make his life blessed.

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An Overview of the Vedas

By Swami Samarpanananda
Ramakrishna Mission: Vivekananda Education and Research Institute
Belur Math, Howrah, W. Bengal

Swami Vivekananda's Vision

While travelling through the length and breadth of India, Swami Vivekananda once reached Punjab, where he had a strange vision. He saw an old man standing on the banks of the Indus, and chanting Vedic hymns, using intonations that were distinctly different from those used in modern times. The passage that he heard was:
Āvahi varadé devi tyaksharé brahmavādinī
Gāytri chandasām mātā brahmayoni namo’stu té
--"O come! Thou Effulgent One, Thou Bestower of Blessings, Signifier of Brahman in three letters! Salutation be to Thee, O Gayatri, Mother of Vedic Mantras, Thou who hast sprung from Brahman!"

Talking about that vision, Swamiji was to say later, 'I saw an old man seated on the bank of the great river. Wave upon wave of darkness was rolling in upon him, and he was chanting from the Rig Veda. Then I awoke and went on chanting. They were the tones that we used long ago... Shankarâchârya had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence. Indeed I always imagine that he had some vision such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music that way. Anyway, his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and Upanishads.' (from Complete Works, Vol. IX).

This vision explains the origin, nature, form, and utility of the Vedas. The Vedic hymns are the prayers to various divinities; they were realised by the rishis (sages) in the depths of their transcendental state; they are supposed to be handed down in a guru-shishya paramparā (teacher to student tradition); they are the rhythm of the national life of India; and spiritual eminence can come to a person only when he catches the rhythm signified by the Vedas.

What are the Vedas

The Vedas are the achievement, glory, power, strength and sustenance of the Hindu race.

Although most Hindus never see Vedic texts in their lifetime, yet, anyone who claims to be a Hindu, has to bow down in reverence to the Vedas, and has to

accept their supreme authority in matters individual, social, philosophical, religious, and spiritual. There is nothing in Hinduism that does not owe its origin and allegiance directly or indirectly to the Vedas.

The Vedas are full of all kinds of knowledge, and is the perfect guide for man in his quest for the four purusartha (goal of life) – Dharma (religious practices), Artha (material welfare), Kama (pleasure and happiness) and Moksha (Salvation). In sacred Hindu literature, the Vedas are considered the very manifestation of God, and the ultimate source of all wisdom and of all Dharma. It is for this reason that every Hindu's conduct, social carriage, religious ambition, and spiritual attainments have been shaped by the Vedas. These sacred texts are the foundation of the Hindu way of life, and also the technical support for its evolution.

There can be no doubt that without these great texts the Hindus would have continued to be savages, and in the long run they would have been annihilated by the marauding looters and the proselytising zealots. When the warrior caste of the Hindu race failed to save the country from the invaders, it was the Vedas that saved the race from internal dissipation; when the bulldozers of science started pulverising every religion into meek submission, it was the Vedas that made the Hindus stand in all majesty and with dignity -- unconquered, unscathed; and today, when materialism and its never satiating ally, consumerism, is sucking the globe of its vitality, it is the Vedas that make the Hindus laugh at the greedy and vain monster in derision.

No words can do justice to the Vedas' contribution to the world civilisation in general, and to the Hindus in particular.

The word veda is derived from the root vid, which has five different meanings (jnaane, labhe, vichaarane etc.), but of which "to know" is more popular. When used as common noun, the term may be used to mean the study of a particular science e.g., dhanurveda, ayurveda etc. As an adjective, it may be used to glorify a book, or a subject, e.g. Srimad Bhagavatam, which is respectfully called "the fifth Veda" by the Bhagavata devotees.

In its more popular sense, Vedas (with an 's') is used as proper noun to refer to the Samhitas (Vedic mantras) associated with the four Vedas (Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda). In a general sense, Vedas also means the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads attached to these Samhitas. As a noun, the word first appears in the Rig Veda, where it means ritual lore.

The Vedas have other names like: Nigama, Shruti, Āmnāya, and trayee to express variously the outlook of various schools of thoughts. For example, Mimamsakas, the traditional Vedic schools, define Shruit as: Shruyate

dharma anayā iti (The injunctions of Dharma that are heard from the guru), and Āmnāya as: Āmnāyate upadishyate anen iti (That which gives instructions). Nigama is defined as the traditional wisdom transmitted from generation to generation, and Veda has been described by Shankaracharya as: Parmātmānām labhante iti (That through which one attains God).

Mimasakas, the traditionalists, limit the scope of the Vedas to instructions and injunctions concerning ritualistic sacrifices, and lay emphasis on the first two portions of the Vedas, The Mantra, and The Brahmana: "Mantrabrāhmanyoh vednam dheyam". According to them, the Upanishads and other texts that talk about Atman, or any such topic, are intended to encourage people towards Vedic sacrifices. As opposed to this view, Shankaracharya believes that the goal of all Vedic texts is to lead a person towards self realisation. According to him, Vedic sacrifices are meant for people who are not yet ready to give up selfish action, and who must wend their way up by first purifying their mind through action.

The Origin and Antiquity of the Vedas: Shruti

<u>The Dating</u>: Who wrote the Vedas? This is an oft-repeated question by the scholars, and the critics of the Vedas. Naturally. When most writers use the 'copy and paste' technique to see their name in print, it is natural for the world to wonder how someone could create such a great thing and not leave their name behind! Since our childhood, we have grown to see the name of the creator associated with the creation. But in India, the concept of the Creator is impersonal, and hence it has been the tendency of the great creators of art, poetry and music to remain anonymous. According to them, the personal degrades, whereas the impersonal elevates.

The Vedas, and their recorders are as impersonal as God Himself.

No single person, or a group of persons wrote the Vedas. As mentioned, the ancient rishis (sages) in the depths of their meditation and also in their transcendental state of mind came face to face with truths which they recorded as The Vedas. These truths were passed from the father to the son, or from the teacher to the disciple orally. Mostly these truths stayed with the families whose ancestors had discovered them. With time, more and more revelations were added to the existing mass, which made it difficult to manage the work through oral tradition. After some time, addition to the existing mass of knowledge was stopped, and every new finding was recorded in some other kind of work.

All this information comes to us from the tradition and writings of the ancient times. Indian scholars neither know, nor care to know the dates related to the Vedas: when they were composed, which section was composed earlier,

when their writing began, etc. The system of such dating began from the times of Max Muller, and continues with the Western scholars. Unfortunately, even for them it is a daunting task. Max Muller fixed the date of the first composition at 1500 BCE, which has now been greatly questioned. Interestingly, there has been a discovery in Asia Minor of the names of the Vedic deities Mitra, Varuna, and Indra, in an inscription of about 1400 BCE.

According to some Indian Vedic scholars like Tilak, who based their calculations on astronomical data, the Vedas were composed at least 8000 years ago. Swami Vivekananda agrees with Tilak, and says, "It was written, nobody knows at what date, it may be 8,000 years ago, in spite of all modern scholars may say, it may be 9,000 years ago."

One serious problem in fixing the date of the Vedas is the ludicrous Aryan invasion theory, according to which Aryans came to India around 2000 BCE, and destroyed the existing civilisation to settle down there. However, this theory and the dates related to it have been refuted by the modern scholars. Swami Vivekananda also debunked this theory strongly, and wrote:

'Whenever the Europeans find an opportunity, they exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on their lands; and therefore they think the Aryans must have done the same! The Westerners would be considered wretched vagabonds if they lived in their native homes depending wholly on their own internal resources, and so they have to run wildly about the world seeking how they can feed upon the fat of the land of others by spoliation and slaughter; and therefore they conclude the Aryans must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guess-work? Then keep your fanciful guesses to yourselves! In what Veda, in what Sukta, do you find that the Aryans came into India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you gain by talking such nonsense? '

Another interesting reason for this problem of dating is the prejudices in the minds of the European scholars, who were all Christians. According to Christianity, the earth, the sun, the stars and everything was created in 4032 BCE (according to the Bible, and the year calculated by the great scientist Newton himself!). Naturally it was impossible for them to believe in a culture which went beyond the official date of the Lord's act.

For our studies, fixing the date of the Vedas is no issue at all. Suffice it to say that the Vedas were revealed to the sages, who passed on the wisdom to their disciples orally. Writing appeared in India around the 5th century BC in the form of the Brahmi script, but texts of the length of the Rig Veda were not written down until much later. Very few manuscripts (a maximum of 80) are available of this work, since most families carried the whole thing in their head. The oldest surviving manuscript dates to the 11th century.

Shruti: The sages took extraordinary precautions to preserve from loss or corruption the sacred text, which was being passed orally. The first step towards this was the formation of the Pada or 'word' text. In the Pada, all the words of the Samhita text are separated and given in their original form, before being shaped by the rules of Sandhi (conjunction). There are other rules too. The two methods of memorisation came to be known as: Samhitāpātha, which has all Sanskrit rules of sandhi applied and is the text used for recitation; and the Padapātha has each word isolated and is used for memorisation.

Padapātha was followed by other and more complicated methods of reciting the text, and by various works called Anukramanis or 'Indexes', which enumerate from the beginning to the end of the Rig Veda the number of stanzas contained in each hymn, the deities, and the metres of all the stanzas of the Rig Veda. It is due to these various precautions that the text of the Vedas have been handed down for thousands of years with a fidelity that finds no parallel in any other literature.

Since these were learnt by listening, these were called Shruti (heard). Other than the Vedas, every other literature which had spiritual connotation was termed Smriti. Throughout the history of India, Shrutis occupied the highest position in matters of respect and authority. In matters of chance conflict between the statements of the two, the words of the Shrutis were accepted as correct.

What is amazing about these works is that they were passed on from generation to generation for 8000 years or so, and were preserved in families all over India. When in the nineteenth century, Max Muller compiled the whole work for its first printing, the world was amazed to see that there was not a single alphabet's discrepancy between the manuscripts of any two families, though they lived separated by thousands of miles and had maintained them orally! This meant that even the most ancient manuscripts were no more authentic than what the Brahmins of the period were reciting from memory.

The world still wonders at the prodigious memory of the Brahmins who preserved a whole library of books in their head, generation after generation for thousands of years! This was the reason why the burning of libraries and the destruction of books in India by the invaders could not destroy the Vedas, and Hinduism was saved from annihilation.

Division of the Vedas

The tradition says that with the growing mass of Vedic literature, and the associated problem of keeping the whole thing in memory, it had become imperative to find ways and means of preserving the pure, and leaving out the

unimportant. So, Vyasa (c. 1500 B.C.E), the great authority that he was of his time, divided the Vedas into four and gave the responsibility of preserving them to four of his great disciples.

He compiled the Rig Veda by collecting the rik mantras, which are a kind of chant set to fixed melodies which are used as prayers during yajnas (sacrifices). This was taught to Paila

The Sāma Veda is a collection of Sāma songs (a particular metre, which can be sung) from Rig Veda. The arrangement of its verses is with reference to their place and use in the Soma sacrifice. This Veda was handed over to Jaimini.

The Yajur Veda is composed of yajus (prose mantras), which are used in sacrifices. Most of its verses are taken from the Rig Veda, but it also contains some original prose mantras which could be used as sacrificial prayers. However, even the Riks in Yajurveda are recited as if they were prose passages. This Veda was taught to Vaishampayana.

Later on, there was a quarrel between Vaishampayana and his prodigious disciple Yajnavalkya. Following the quarrel, Yajnavalkya left his guru and performed the tapasya of the Sun God, who taught him the Veda afresh. This version of Yajurveda is called Shukla Yajur Veda, or Vājasaneyi Samhitā (from Vāj, which means energy, or strength).

The Atharva Veda consists of a special class of Vedic texts known as chhanda, which are comprised of Riks (5/6) and Yajus (1/6). These mantras deal mostly with magic, spells, incantations, kingly duties, and also spiritual truths. Sumanta was taught this work.

There are lots of repetitions of the mantras in these Vedas. For example, 140 Rig Veda mantras are repeated in the Rig Veda itself, 1800 Rig Veda mantras are repeated in Samaveda, 230 Atharva Veda mantras have been repeated in the Atharva Veda, 1 Yajurveda mantra has been repeated in Samaveda, and so on.

The division of the Vedas and the arrangement of the hymns followed precise rules and was fully scientific. To take one small example, in mandala II to VII of the Rig Veda Samhita, the arrangements of the hymns is by gods, with Agni at the head, followed by Indra; and in Mandala IX the arrangement is by metres. Within any series, the arrangement of the hymns is in descending order of the number of verses. Thus various rules were applied to make the arrangements systematic.

The four basic Vedas gradually branched off into many recension, or śākhās which were maintained by various teachers. Slowly these recension came to be known by the name of these teachers. Thus the Satapatha Brahmana of the Shukla Yajur Veda survives in Kānva and Mādhyandina recension, according to the two disciples of Yajnavalkya. These versions differ greatly in content, the number of verses, and the arrangement of the sections and chapters; the former has seventeen, whereas the latter has fourteen sections. Interestingly, the concluding portion of both recension is the Brihadaranyaka Upanishada; but that too differs in the two shakhas. Shankaracharya's commentary on this Upanishad is based on the Kānva recension.

<u>Trayee: The three Vedas</u>: The term trayī, or triad, often used to denote the Vedas, is collectively applied to Rig, Sam, and Yajur. The Atharva is excluded from the triad because it has no application to sacrificial actions. This has made many Western scholars conclude wrongly that Atharva Veda is a later composition. What they miss is the fact that one of the four priests officiating in all Vedic sacrifices had to be from Atharva Veda tradition.

Categories of Vedic texts

Vedic texts are traditionally categorised into four classes: the Samhitās (Mantra), Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. Certain Sutra literature like Shrautasutras and the Grhyasutras are also classified as "Vedic".

A collection of Mantras is called a Samhita. At times, it is often the Samhita portion alone which is referred to as the Veda. For instance, the word 'Rigveda' may mean the Rigveda Samhita.

The Brāhmanas are prose texts that discuss the sacrificial rituals as well as comment on their meaning and some other connected themes. Each of the Brahmanas is associated with one of the Samhitas or its recension. The Brahmanas may either form separate texts or can be partly integrated into the text of the Samhitas. They may also include the Aranyakas and Upanishads.

The Āranyakas, or "forest texts", are the concluding part of the Brahmanas that contain discussions on upasana, the meditation on sacrificial symbols. However, there is often no clear-cut distinction between the Brahmanas proper and the Aranyakas, or between the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The Brahmana text proper often merges into the Aranyakas and many old Upanishads are actually embedded in the Aranyakas.

The Upanishads are the philosophical works of the Vedas. They discuss the nature of the soul and the world, and conclude that "Atman is Brahman". These works are now known as Vedanta ("the end of the Vedas") and are the basis of the all the Vedantic schools of thought which developed in later

times. For thousands of years now, the Upanishads have been the backbone of the Hindu religion.

Although the four sections (Samhita, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads) of the Vedas follow each other in succession, there are exceptions to this. For example, in Rigveda, Samaveda, Shukla Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, there is a clear-cut separation of the Mantra collection from the Brahmana portions, but in Krishna Yajurveda, the Mantra and the Brahmana portions are intermixed. Thus, the Taittiriya 'Samhita', belonging to the Krishna Yajurveda, has Mantras interspersed with Brahmana portions. Again, Taittiriya 'Brahmana' has both Mantras and Brahmana passages mixed with each other. Similarly, Isa Upanishad comes at the end of the Samhita itself instead of the Aranyaka. Some Upanishads come at the end of the Brahmana and some others are not distinctly separate from their respective Aranayka. The list goes on.

Nevertheless, it is advisable to stick to this kind of division (which was advocated strongly by Max Muller) because it more or less follows the Indian tradition and conveys the historical sequence fairly accurately.

The Shrauta Sutras, regarded as belonging to the Smriti, are late Vedic in language and content. The composition of the Shrauta and Grhya Sutras marks the end of the Vedic period, and at the same time, the beginning of the Vedanga literature (the six auxiliary texts of the Vedas).

While production of Brahmanas and Aranyakas ceased with the end of the Vedic period, a large number of Upanishads were composed after the end of the Vedic period. But to make them authentic, the followers of these Upanishads claim them to be belonging to the lost portions of the Vedas.

It is believed by many scholars that the four kinds of Vedic texts: Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishads were actually meant for people belonging to the four ashrama: Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha, and Sannyasa respectively. Although the subject matters in the four divisions of the Vedas tend to overlap, the preponderance of prayer, rituals, contemplation, and knowledge respectively indicate that the view held by the scholars may be correct. However, there is no specific instruction regarding this.

Vedic Shakhas

The Vedic literature that has come down to us is attached to various traditional schools of recitation and ritual called the 'shakhas'. All the four Vedas have more than one shakha at present, but in the past, the number of shakhas studied was many times more. According to Patanjali, there were 21

shakhas of Rigveda, 9 of Atharvaveda, 101 of Yajurveda (86 of Krishna Yajurveda and 15 of Shukla Yajurveda, according to later authorities) and a 1000 varieties of chanting of Samaveda. Maybe, the number 1000 for the Samaveda merely refers to 'numerous'.

Two different Vedic shakhas might share one or more texts amongst themselves. Conversely, the distinction between two shakhas of the same Veda might result from the use of a different Samhita text, and/or a different Brahmana text, and/or different Kalpasutra text and so on. A group or a community of people who study a particular shakha in its entirety (Samhita + Brahmana + Aranyaka + Kalpasutra + any additional texts) and perform its ritual constitute a 'charana'.

The various shakhas of the Vedas were, at one time, spread throughout South Asia. Their geographical location has not been constant down the ages, as Brahmins of a particular shakha migrated from one part of India to the other, or adopted another shakha for some reason.

Language of the Vedas

Early Vedic language was a pitch accent language in which the same alphabet was used in three different ways -- svarita, udatta, anudatta; the higher on scale, the normal, and the lower. This helped the Vedic sages to adjust the rhythm and melody of the hymns, and were considered extremely important during pronunciation.

The kind of Sanskrit used in the Vedas became obsolete long ago. Even the words and expressions used there are now difficult to understand. The meaning of the major portion of the Rig Veda is clear, but some hymns and a great many of the single stanzas are still obscure or unintelligible. This was already the case in the time of Yaska, the author of the Nirukta (in which the Vedic grammar, etymology, and semantics are explained), the oldest available commentary (c. 700 B.C.) on about 600 detached stanzas of the Rig Veda.; for he quotes one of his predecessors, Kautsa, as saying that the Vedic hymns are obscure, difficult to understand, and mutually contradictory.

In the 13th century, the celebrated Vedic scholar Sayanacharya, wrote his famous commentaries on the Vedas. It is mainly with the help of these commentaries and the Nirukta that we are able to understand the contents of the Vedas.

Some basic facts about the Vedas

Vedas	*Rig* Veda	Krishna Yajur Veda	Sukla Yajur Veda	Sāma Veda	Atharva Veda
No. of original Recensions (*shakha*)	21	85	17	1000	50
Available Recensions or Shakas	Shakala, Bashkala	Taitiriya, Maitrayani, Katha, Kapisthala	Kanva, Madhyandina (Vajasanya)	Kauthuma, Ranayaniya, Jaiminiya, or Talavakara	Pippalada Shaunaka
Taught to sages:	Paila	Vaishampayana	Vaishampayana	Jaimini	Sumanta
Number of Verses in *Samhita*	10,552	1975	1975	1875	5977 in Shaunakiya
Brahmanas	Aitaraya, Kaushitaki or Shankhyayana	Taittiriya, Kāthaka	Sathapatha (two recensions)	Vamsa, Jaiminiya, Tandya/ Panchavimsa, Chhandogya, Sāmavidhana, Sadvimsa, Samhitopanishad, Devatadhyana	Gopatha
Aranyakas	Aitaraya, Kaushitaki or Sānkhyāyana	Taitttiriya, Maitrāyani,	Brihadaranyaka (two recensions)	Chhandogya, Jaiminiya	
Upanishads	Aitaraya, Kaushitiki, Bhashkala	Mahanarayana, Maitrāyani, Katakha, Swetaswetara, Taitiriya	Isavasya, Brihadaranyaka	Chandogya, Kena	Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya
Shrouta Sutras	Aswalayana, Shankhyayana	Apasthamba, Baudhayana, Hiranyakesi, Bharadwaja, Vaikhanasa, Vadhoola, Manava, Varaha	Katyayana (Paraskara)	Khadira, Latyayana, Drahyayana, Jaiminiya	Vikhanasa
Grihya Sutras	Ashwalayana, Sankyayana	Manava, Apasthamba, Baudhayana, Hiranyakesi, Vaikhanasa, Katha	Kaatyayana (Paaraskara)	Khadira, Gobhila, Gautama, Jaiminiya	Kaushika
Dharma Sutras	Vasishtha	Apasthamba Baudhayana, Hiranyakesi	Shankkhalikita	Gautama	Pathinasi
Upaveda	Ayurveda	Dhanurveda	Dhanurveda	Gandharvaveda	ArthaSastra
Priests	Hotri	Adhvaryu	Adhvaryu	Udgatri	Brahma
Priest's job during Yajna	Invoking the gods through hymns	Performing the sacrifice	Performing the sacrifice	Singing the Sāmagāna	Overall supervision

Secular Matters in the Vedas

Secular hymns: Scholars believe that less than 20 hymns of the Rig Veda are secular in character. These have a special value since they throw some light on the earliest thought and civilisation of India. They talk of wedding, funeral rites, and one of them [R. X. 34] is the lamentations of a gambler who, unable to resist the fascination of the dice, deplores the ruin to which he has brought on his family.

However, traditionalists do not accept that there is anything secular in the Vedas; everything is subjected to religious norms, sometimes openly, sometimes in a couched language. For example, the hymn related to the lamentations of the gambler is actually a mantra used for driving away the evil spirit that causes the tendency to gamble. Similarly the hymns to the frog (VII.103) are used for getting rains when they fail to come on time.

Mythological dialogues: Besides several mythological dialogues in which the speakers are divine beings, there are two in which both agents are human. One is a somewhat obscure colloquy (R. X. 95) between the mortal Puraravas and the apsara Urvasi, who is on the point of forsaking him. The other one (R. X. 10) is the dialogue between Yama and Yami, the twin parents of the human race. This group of hymns has a special literary interest as the forerunner of the dramatic works of a later age.

Riddles: Two hymns of the Vedas consist of riddles. One of these (R. VIII. 29) describes various gods without mentioning their names.

There is an elaborate and obscure poem of fifty-two stanzas (R.I.164), in which a number of riddles, largely connected with the sun are propounded in mystical and symbolic language.

Geographical data: From the geographical names mentioned in the Rig Veda., it has been inferred that when the hymns were composed, the sages occupied the territory corresponding to Punjab of to-day. The interesting mention in the Vedas is of the river Saraswati, now extinct. Scholars were concluding many things from the misrepresentation of the fact, but recent developments have proved the existence of that river.

Historical data: According to some scholars, many hymns apparently show that the Indo-Aryans (the early race of the Vedic sages) were engaged in war with the local aborigines, and many victories over these foes have been mentioned. The conquered ones were called 'dasa', which also meant, 'of the dark colour. But, this theory is now disputed. 'Dasa' may mean anyone with evil tendencies (and were considered non-sacrificers and non-believers of law, and morality), and victory over them may mean the victory of the good over the bad.

Society: Incidental references scattered throughout the hymns supply a good deal of information about the social conditions of the time. The family, with the father at its head, was the basis of society, and women held a freer and more honoured position than in later times. Many women were sages, and contributed in the composition of the hymns.

Rig Veda (X.18.8) and Atharva Veda have hymns which talk of the wooing by a young man of the just widowed lady for remarriage. Also in Atharva Veda (9.5.27) there is a clear mention of widow remarriage.

Occupation: The caste system had already started growing in India, but had not yet become as rigid as it became later on. So, the distribution of occupations to people belonging to various guilds was already in practice. Also, the need to pass on the Samhita to a worthy disciple, necessitated the crystallisation of the caste system.

Characteristics of the Vedas

Veda is knowledge in entirety: There can be no end to knowledge since it is as infinite as God Himself, and is one with Him. This has been pointed out beautifully in the Bible, 'In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God' (John 1:1). Such being the nature of knowledge, it is ever present, and everywhere; since God is also ever present and is present everywhere. Depending on the state of one's mind, one can reach the various levels of the Eternal Knowledge, which we call art, science, philosophy, poetry, spiritual truths etc. However, the major portion of the sum total of knowledge has to remain unexplored because of the limitations of the mind.

Veda is the sum total of all knowledge: discovered and undiscovered, and The Vedas (the books) are the records of the truths discovered by the human mind. Thus in a general sense, Vedas are the orthodox religious and philosophical wisdom of India, and in its particular sense, these are the books in which the earliest wisdom is preserved. In this writing, the term Veda has been used to mean Knowledge, and the Vedas, to mean the entire Samhita, Brahman, Aranyaka, and the Upanishads.

Vedas are impersonal and eternal: For the Hindus, Vedas are eternal, without beginning and without human authorship. The reason is simple. Creation means appearance of objects. Each object has a name or word for it, and each word has for its counterpart an object. The object denoted by a word is not individual in nature, but is generic. For example, the word "cow" is generic, and it does not depend on the birth or death of any particular cow.

The universe and its objects have both name and form as the essential condition for their manifestation. The thought wave in us, or in God, first manifests as a word and only then it manifests as the more concrete form, the object. In every created thing, the idea is the essence, whereas the form is only the external shell, and the name acts as the intermediary. It is in this sense that the universe is said to be created/manifested from the Vedic words.

Objects being eternal (during creation), and the relationship between word and object being eternal, Vedas and Vedic words are eternal. When dissolution takes place, Vedas are merged with God. It is like the idea of "pot" staying merged with the potter, when there is no "pot" around.

Unlike the works of, say a great poet, Vedas are impersonal. It is wrong to think that Vedas are the works of sages. The rishis only discovered them. By means of good deeds (the priests) attained the capacity to understand the Vedas; (then) they found them dwelling in the Rishis (RV 10.71.3).

Vedas have also been described as the inner life of man, and hence eternal. Making it more clear, Patanjali, the author of Yoga Sutras, says that the words of the Vedas are not eternal, but it is the knowledge (ideas) conveyed through them that is. In Sanskrit, the eternal Knowledge is also known as Sphota, and so the Vedas are also known as Shabda Brahman, i.e, God as word. It is because of this that the work is treated with the greatest reverence by the Hindus. In many Indian temples, they are even worshipped as a deity.

The Vedas command so much respect that every Hindu philosopher has to show that whatever they have to say, is in consonance with the Vedas. This is known as Shruti Praman. The systems of philosophy that refuses to accept the Vedas as the ultimate authority, are called nastika darshana (lit. atheistic philosophy).

Vedas are the oldest literature of the world: The oldest trace of literary sources from the ancient Greek world is the works of Homer (c. 700 BCE). From the Middle East, the oldest books are the Hebrew Bible. Parts of the Old Testament are much older, but they took shape only around 500 BCE. The Gathas of Zoroaster are also old (525 BCE), but they appeared later than the Vedas. The oldest book from the Chinese tradition is the I Ching whose core portions are believed to be of 1000 BCE or so.

Thus Samhitas (according to Max Muller, 1500 BCE), the collections of Vedic hymns, are the oldest literature of the world. It has been conclusively proved that no book, or literature as we understand the terms, was written anywhere near the period that these Samhitas were recorded. They are the earliest records of the aspirations of human minds, the questions that arose, and the possible answers that they comprehended to those great riddles.

Vedas are vast: It is believed that the total content of the Vedas was so vast that the Samhitas (texts) alone were enough to fill up a room. Patanjali mentions that the Sama Veda had one thousand branches, but they are all lost, and we are left with only three branches. Similar loss has occurred with each of the Vedas; the major portion of them has disappeared, and we have been left with only minor portion. As we shall see, the various portions were under the care of particular families; each branch put into the head of certain priests and kept alive by memory and when these families died out, or were killed under foreign persecution, or somehow became extinct; these portions were lost forever.

The whole corpus of Vedic mantras (only the Samhita) have around 20,400 hymns which run in around 90,000 padas (lines). This does not include the mantra, aranyak, and the upanishad portions of the Vedas. Compared to this, The Mahabharata, considered to be the largest work, has 1,00,000 shlokas (mostly of 2 lines each).

The Two approaches: The approach to the study of the Vedas is twofold: the Western, and the traditional Indian. F. Max Muller, the great Indologist, initiated a deep interest in the Western minds towards the Vedas. His contribution in the various fields of study of the Vedas has been simply immense, but his approach is constrained. Even Swami Vivekananda, who had met Max Muller, and admired him a lot, was not willing to accept everything that he had said about the Vedas, their date, or their interpretation.

The traditional Indian approach, on the other hand, has a rich heritage, and has an unbroken tradition of thousands of years which continues even now. Swami Vivekananda, despite his modern outlook, always held the orthodox Indian view when it came to the Vedas.

In this article, the approach is traditional. Whenever needed, help has been taken from the Western sources, but in case of any conflicting view, the traditional approach has been retained.

Religion in the Vedas

The Vedas are the first attempt in recorded history of mankind to express the Divine in words. So these sacred books present before us the various layers of understanding of spiritual matters. No wonder that these layers appear to many as confusing, and to some others as contradictory. But in reality these ideas are complimentary, and are more like stepping stones to the highest truth.

Vedas are about Nature worship, and not about ancestor worship: Scholars all over the world believe that religion began with the practice of ancestor worship. But this cannot be accepted as true in the case of the Vedas.

The Vedic religion began with nature worship, as we have seen earlier. Swami Vivekananda says, 'The human mind seems to struggle to get a peep behind the scenes. The dawn, the evening, the hurricane, the stupendous and gigantic forces of nature, its beauties, these have exercised the human mind, and it aspires to go beyond, to understand something about them. In the struggle they endow these phenomena with personal attributes, giving them souls and bodies, sometimes beautiful, sometimes transcendent. Every attempt ends by these phenomena becoming abstractions whether personalised or not.'

<u>The gods and their life</u>: The gods of the Vedas are largely personifications of the powers of nature. The hymns are mainly invocations of these gods, and are meant to accompany the offering that is made in the fire during a yajna. In the Rigveda, it is stated that there are 33 gods divided into three groups of eleven, distributed in earth, air, and heaven. Many other deities, such as the Maruts, are not included in this number. The gods were believed to have had a beginning, but were not projected as having come into being at the same time. Rigveda occasionally refers to earlier gods; and certain deities are described as the offspring of others.

The gods were conceived of as human in appearance. Their bodily parts are figurative illustrations of the phenomena of nature represented by them. For example, the arms of the Sun are his rays; and the tongue and limbs of Agni are the flames of fire. Some of the gods appear as warriors, especially Indra, while others like Agni and Brihaspati are priests. All of them drive through the air in cars, drawn chiefly by steeds, but sometimes by other animals. The favourite food of men is also that of the gods, which include non-vegetarian items. These are offered to them in the sacrifice, which is either conveyed to them in heaven by the god of fire, or they come physically to join the sacrifice. Their favourite drink is Soma rasa, the exhilarating juice of the Soma plant. The home of the gods is heaven, where cheered by draughts of Soma, they live a life of bliss.

<u>Attributes of the gods</u>: Being great and mighty, their most prominent attribute is power. They regulate the order of nature and also defeat creatures with evil tendencies (like asuras). They hold sway over all creatures; no one can thwart their ordinances or live beyond the time they appoint, and the fulfilment of desires of human beings is dependent on them. They are benevolent beings who bestow prosperity on mankind. They are described as 'true' and 'not deceitful', being friends and protectors of the honest and righteous, but punishing sin and guilt.

These gods have many features common in them, such as power, brilliance, benevolence, and wisdom. This identification was further increased by the practice of invoking deities in pairs (mentioned later)-- a practice that made many gods share a lot of common characteristics.

Classification of gods: The Vedic gods may be classified as deities of heaven, air, and earth. The celestial gods are Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitr, Pusan, the Asvins, and the goddesses Usas, and Ratri. The atmospheric gods are Indra, Rudra, the Maruts, Vayu, Parjanya, and the Waters. The terrestrial deities are Prthivi, Agni, and Soma. There are also certain rivers that are personified and invoked in the Rigveda, the most important of them is Saraswati.

The nature and character of the gods will be discussed in a latter section.

Abstract deities: One can clearly see the flow of worship from the concrete to the abstract, which also gave rise to abstract deities. For example, 'Dhatri' was an attribute of Indra, but later on became itself a deity who was responsible for the creation of the earth, sun and moon.

There are a few other abstract deities whose names were originally epithets of older gods, but later became epithets of the supreme God. For example, the epithet Visvakarman, 'all-creating', appears as the name of an independent deity. The concept of a Supreme God, as we understand it now, evolved a little later.

The second and smaller class of abstract deities are those who are the personification of abstract nouns. In this class are the Manyu, 'Wrath'; Sraddha, 'Faith'; Anumati, 'Favour (of the gods)', Nirrti, 'Disease', and others.

A purely abstract deity is Aditi, whose main characteristic is the power of delivering from the bonds of physical suffering and moral guilt. It was much later that she was personified as the mother of the small group of deities called Adityas, 'sons of Aditi'.

Goddesses: Only a few goddesses are mentioned in the Vedas, of whom, Usas and Sarasvati are the famous ones. Sarasvati is celebrated in two whole hymns (R. VI. 61, and R. VII. 95) as well as parts of others. There are others like Vac, 'Speech' (R.X. 71. 125), Prthivi, 'Earth', and Ratri, 'Night'. The wives of the great gods are insignificant, being mere names formed from those of their consorts, and altogether lacking in individuality.

Dual Divinities: A novel feature of the religion of the Rigveda is the invocation of pairs of deities whose names are combined as compounds. About two dozen such pairs are mentioned. The most famous of these pairs are Mitra-Varuna, and Dyava-prthivi.

Groups of Deities: There are also groups of gods like the Maruts (wind gods) who attend on Indra. The smaller group of the Adityas, of whom Varuna is the chief, is constantly mentioned in company with their mother Aditi. Their

number is stated to be seven or, with the addition of Martanda, eight. A much less important group, without individual names or definite number, is that of the Vasus, whose leader is generally Indra.

Lesser Divinities: Besides the higher gods, there are a number of lesser divine powers, of which the most prominent are the Ribhus. They are three divinities with marvellous skills, which made them divine. There is also the mention of an apsara (celestial dancer), and a gandharva (celestial musician). In later literature, these two celestial beings became more numerous. There are also a few divinities who are guardians watching over the welfare of the homes and fields of human beings. For example, Sita, the 'Furrow', is invoked to give rich crops and blessings.

We also find the rivers, waters, and the mountains praised as divinities. Also deified are the sacrificial implements like mortar, pestle, sacrificial post etc.

The Demons: They are often mentioned of as two kinds. The higher and more powerful class are the aerial foes of the gods, called the asuras. Danu was the mother of these asuras, so they are also called dānava.

The second or lower class of demons are the terrestrial ones who are the enemies of men. Their generic name is Rakshasas. Another class of demons scarcely referred to in the Rigveda, but often mentioned in other Vedas, are the Pisachas, eaters of raw flesh and corpses.

The Pitris: The term fathers (pitris) in the Veda means the first ancestors, but the term is also used to generally mean the totality of the dead, whose last rites have been performed according to the Vedic injunctions. These pitris are immortal, equal to gods, their comrade-in-arms, and desirous of offerings by their descendent. Mantras used for making food offerings to them end with svadhā, whereas the offerings made to the gods, end with svāhā.

However, these pitris are the antithesis of gods, for, a person who gets attracted to pitriloka, cannot proceed further in his spiritual journey. This idea was first mentioned in the Brahmanas and was further developed in later literature. It is for this reason that eating of shrāddha food is discouraged for spiritual aspirants.

Rituals: When gods have appeared in a religion, can rituals be far behind? Once the Vedic sages came up with the concept of gods, the practice of making offerings to them became more and more pervasive. Soon there were rituals for the various hours of the day, for different special days, seasons, occasions and purpose. The Samhita and the Brahmana literature are mostly about these yajna.

The aspects of these rites and sacrifices will be discussed in a later section. Here we only mention that these sacrifices were of two types: domestic, grihya, and public, shrauta. The former did not require the presence of priests, whereas the latter required them.

Do's and don'ts: Being a guide to the path of pravritti (religion characterised by action), the Vedas discuss vidhi (injunctions) and nisedha (prohibitions) in the form of rituals, and a few codes of individual conduct. These were further classified as Nitya (daily rituals), naimittika (rituals performed on special occasions), kāmya (rituals related to some desired goal), prāyaschitta (penances), and nisiddha (prohibited actions).

The code givers of later times made a thorough job of this aspect of the Vedas, and tied the Hindu race in the rigours of rituals. This class of literature came to be known as Smritis.

Morality: The term in the Vedas for the cosmic moral laws, ritual, and order -- all in one-- is rtam, which is higher even to the gods.

Vrata (religious observances) are performed in accordance with rtam; dharma is the ritual support of vrata; shraddhā is the power that allows one to perform vrata; and tapas is that which is released from the body due to the efforts made during ascetic effort (during vrata, or other religious rites).

Atman: There can be no religious life unless one accepts the continuation of life in some form after death. One can be moral without this idea, but cannot be religious.

The whole of Vedic literature and the later scriptures of Indian origin accepted the presence of something permanent behind the impermanent body. This was called jiva (the soul). Why else would one worry about making sacrifices and leading a moral life?

With time, the idea of the self, transmigrating through heaven and hell, was perfected. But the sages soon realised that this was a naive concept. Finally the Upanishadic sages came up with the remarkable solution to the great riddle of existence. They proclaimed: Atman is Brahman -- the Individual is one with the Universal. This unique concept of Atman (different from jiva) differentiates Hinduism from all other religions. A thorough discussion on the nature of Atman can be found in the Upanishad section.

Karma and Rebirth: The concept of rebirth came pretty early on in the Vedas, but the term signifying samsāra and total migration was coined in the Katha Upanishad (Atharva Veda) only. The idea was the logical fall out of the law of cycle, according to which, a thing that has happened once, will happen again.

Later on, this doctrine was to become the most powerful and profound pillar of Hindu philosophy.

Heaven and hell: The early ideas of the dead in the Rig Veda were that they went by "the path that their fathers had taken" and reached heaven, where they were awaited by pleasure, idleness and enjoyment. Those who practised asceticism, performed sacrifices, gave gifts, cultivated rtam (universal moral order), and studied the Vedas reached these sukrita loka (heaven).

The idea of hell developed later and gradually. The place was reserved for the enemies of the Vedas, impious, and greedy.

However, by the Upanishadic times, it was universally accepted that both these abodes of the dead were only temporary places of residence. After the exhaustion of its karma, the soul returned back to earth to continue with its journey towards liberation, mukti.

Mukti: The concept of mukti is the culmination of the great spiritual truth: Atman is Brahman. In the state of mukti, one transcends the states of duality like pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, birth and death etc. and experiences unalloyed, and infinite joy.

The sages also realised that the mukti (liberation) of a soul was not possible through any sacrifice, asceticism, moral observance, or any other action; it could be achieved only through the knowledge of the Self.

Philosophy of the Vedas

The discussions in the Vedas on a great many topics are so vast that it is impossible to organise them in a single work; and, even a whole life devoted to its study would be too short to fully understand and comprehend any aspect of the Vedas. The same is true of its philosophy-- they are vast, obscure, and very difficult to organise.

Creation: In the Vedas we come across various theories of creation, most popular of which are found in Purusa Suktam and Nasadiya Sukta. Whatever the theory, they all agree in the periodic nature of creation and dissolution.

In Purusa Sukta, creation is described as having come from God, the Lord, whose external form is one-fourth of the whole manifest universe.
The theory of creation in Nasadiya Sukta is more impersonal, according to which the creative power existed without vibration (Ānidavātam) after the dissolution of the previous cycle (kalpa). In that state, there is a kind of equilibrium, which is characterised by absence of any kind of motion. When the process of creation is about to begin, there appears mysteriously the power that disturbs this equilibrium, and the creative process begins.

The later philosophers and poets took up both these concepts to develop and consolidate their system of thought, the most famous of which are Samkhya, and the Bhagavata dhrama (detailed in the Puranas). The whole of Indian philosophy (excepting those who do not believe in any creation at all), accepts one of these two models and modifies them to suit its needs.

Vedic hymns are god-centred: Vedic hymns, as mentioned earlier, are mostly in praise of god, their life stories, mythologies connected with them, and the method by which oblations can be offered to them. In between these, one does get a peep at the higher philosophy of life. These occasional utterings were later developed fully in the Upanishads.

The idea of Infinity: Unlike the mythologies of other religions, the Vedas treat their gods as expressions of the Infinite. For example, Indra is described as having a body, and is also described as being omnipresent and omnipotent. Most of these gods are treated as beings in whom the whole universe exists, who can read every mind, and who are also the ruler of the universe.

It was through this idea of infinity that the sages came up with the idea of Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti--That which exists is One; sages call It by various names. To the sages, the Being perceived was one and the same, but the perceiver was different. And, that is how they sang out:
They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni,
And there is the Divine nobly winged Garutmān
To what is One, sages give many a name
And call It Agni, Yama, Matarisvān. (Rigveda. I. 164-46)

Beginning of Monotheism without the ideas of fear and sin: Monotheism (the doctrine of one God), came very early in the Vedas, but not in the form that the Semitic religions believe. As mentioned earlier, the gods were taken up one by one and made into the Supreme God. In the case of Varuna, the sages even came up with the idea of sin and fear (the essential component of all monotheistic religions), but these ideas were soon given up as demeaning. Later, the sages were to give up the very idea of monotheism itself, realising that it was too inadequate to explain the world.

The answer to mysteries lies within: The Vedas teach both pravritti (prohibitions and injunctions in the life of a householder), and Nivritii (giving up of all worldly enjoyments) as twin spiritual ideals.

The sages realised that by nature the senses are limited, and are capable of getting only the external sense data. This meant that they were not in a position to grasp the supreme self, which is infinite, and behind the world of phenomena. That was when the sages declared that all philosophical search for spirituality had to be internal and not external.

The reality of the external world is obvious to every human being. This obvious presence of the external world logically suggests the presence of a Creator God. However, the presence of this kind of God always poses serious logical fallacies, and instead of remaining infinite, He is reduced to being finite. It is at this point that true spirituality is born. True spirituality preaches that God is beyond and untouched by Creation, and search for Him must be made within one's own heart.

Vedas culminated into Vedanta: The sages reached those heights of philosophy where even the most daring would be frightened. How?

The Vedas were never monotheistic. So in the ultimate analysis, the sages realised that 'behind the unreal, God alone was Real'. This meant that everything other than God, was unreal. Even the rituals, scriptures, and injunctions were equally unreal when it came to the ultimate realisation. So, in the last leg of the spiritual journey, a person had to give up even those supports with the help of which he had made his spiritual journey so far. At that final stage, he had to depend only on his purified mind for the realisation of his self. The Vedas declare, 'tatra ved aveda bhavati' – in that state the Vedas become aveda, of no significance. This indeed is the ultimate in boldness for any spiritual seeker, for, no Christian, or a Muslim can ever think of outgrowing his scripture.

This inward turning gave birth to real philosophy, which came to be known as Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda says, 'And they found out step by step that that which is external is but a dull reflection at best of that which is inside. ... He is not a God outside, but He is inside; and they took Him from there into their own hearts. Here He is, in the heart of man, the Soul of our souls, the Reality in us.'

Post Vedic Influence

Philosophy: Philosophies and sects that developed in the Indian subcontinent have taken differing positions on the Vedas. Schools of Indian philosophy which cite the Vedas as their authority are classified as āstika, "orthodox". The other one is nāstika, "heterodox" or "non-Vedic" schools, which comprise of Chārvāka (materialism), Buddhism and Jainism. So, a philosophy can be called "Hindu" only if it accepts the authority of the Vedas as supreme.

Religion: The Vedas contain all the four essential pillars of religion: ritual, mythology, philosophy, and conduct. But they were not fully evolved. It was for the sages of later period to develop each of these four aspects separately as. Rituals were taken up by Tantra, mythology was taken up by the Puranas, philosophy evolved into Upanishads, and code of conduct evolved into Smritis.

Poetry: The Vedic poetry evolved into The Ramayana, and The Mahabharata, which also came to be known as epics. Vedic poetry had a tremendous impact on the Indian psyche, and it influenced nearly every poet of later times.

Society: The society of the Vedic period had started organising itself in varna and ashrama (the caste, and the four stages). Although these were not as rigid as they were in later times, they were also not as fluid as one might suppose. The norms that were set by the Vedic sages, and the practises that were advocated by them, continue to be in vogue even today. Only necessary additions and corrections, considered useful for the contemporary society, have been made over the years.

Contents of the Vedas

Rig Veda

The hymns of the Rig Veda are considered the oldest and most important of the Vedas. Atharva Veda and Yajurveda draw heavily from it, and nearly the whole of Samaveda is a collection of hymns from this sacred book.

The Rig Veda has 1028 hymns (suktas) divided into ten mandalas (books). The shortest sukta (hymn) has 1 verse, whereas the longest has 58 verses. The total number of verses in it is 10,462. Each sukta consists of a number of verses, which are called richā. Here it may be mentioned that the verses of the Vedas are in general called mantra (as opposed to shloka¸ of other works), and also have specific names like rik, or, richā .

The hymns addressed to various divinities vary in frequency. The maximum number of hymns, 250, are addressed to Indra, followed by Agni with 200. These hymns were used, and are still used as prayers during a sacrifice (yajna). The priest who recited these verses was known as hotr.

The samhita is preserved in two shakha (recension): Śākala and Bāskala, which are practically identical. The slight difference is in the Brāhmana associated with them. However, it is the Sakala tradition (Shakalya was the sage) which survived the ravages of time, and reached us.

The division of the Vedas and the arrangement of the hymns follow precise rules. In mandala II to VII, hymns to Agni comes in the beginning, and is then followed by those to Indra. The hymns contained in each of these mandalas were composed by the poets of same family, and were handed down from generation to generation. The poets in the order of books are: Gritsamada, Vishwamitra, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadwaja, and Vasistha.

Within any series, the arrangement of the hymns is in descending order of the number of verses. When several hymns have the same number of verses, they are arranged in descending order of the length of the metre, and so forth.

This precise arrangement of verses is a proof that Vyasa (or someone like him) must have organised the whole thing systematically much after they were composed.

Book I, and VIII are of mixed nature, but have similarity in the arrangement of the hymns.

Book IX is distinguished from the rest of the Rig Veda in the sense that all its hymns are addressed to one and the same deity, Soma, (the other books do not contain a single Soma hymn). Also, its grouping is based not on authorship, but on metres used. Many scholars believe that Book IX was deliberately taken out of other books, so that it could be used easily for Soma sacrifice.

The Xth book has the same number of verses as the Ist book, and was handled by the sages of different families. In contrast, each one of books II – VII was handled by a particular family. In spite of this book's generally more modern character, it contains hymns quite as old and poetic as the average of those in other books. The grammatical forms and words are quite obsolete, and yet new words and meanings seem to be emerging from them. All these factors combine to confuse the scholars regarding its possible date of composition, and also about its correct place in the series of the ten books.

<u>Content of Rig Veda</u>: The chief gods of the Rig Veda are Indra, a heroic god who is praised for having slain his enemy Vrtra; Agni, the sacrificial fire; and Soma, the sacred potion. Other prominent gods are Mitra-Varuna and Ushas (the dawn). Also invoked are Savitr, Vishnu, Rudra, Pushan, Brihaspati, Brahmanaspati, as well as deified natural phenomena such as Dyaus Pita (the sky), Prithivi (the earth), Surya (the sun), Vayu (the wind), Apas (the waters), Parjanya (the rain), Vac (the word), many rivers (notably the Sapta Sindhu, and the Sarasvati River). Groups of deities are the Ashvins, the Maruts, the Adityas, the Ribhus, the Vishvadevas. It contains many other minor gods, persons, concepts, phenomena and items, and sketchy references to historical events.

According to the Śatapatha Brāhmana, the number of syllables in the Rig Veda is 432,000, equalling the number of muhurtas in forty years (30 muhurtas make 1 day). Interestingly, that is also the number of years that one kalpa (the life span of Brahma, the Creator) has, i.e., 4,320,000,000 years.

This stresses the underlying philosophy of the Vedic books that there is a strong connection between the astronomical, the physiological, and the spiritual.

Sāma Veda

In sanctity, the Sāma Veda ranks next to the Rig Veda. Its Samhita consists of hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses, taken mostly from the Rig Veda. These were transposed and re-arranged to suit the religious ceremonies in which they were to be employed. Of the 1875 hymns that it contains, most are from the eighth and ninth mandala of the Rig Veda, and were sung by the Udgatri priests during the Soma sacrifices.

The animal sacrifices did not use Sāma chants, but these chants were extensively used in agricultural rites and in soma rituals. The hymns are addressed to Indra, Agni, and Soma.

The Sāmaveda is considered to be the origin of Indian music. Its melodies use the seven svaras or notes. Unfortunately the melodies belonging to the samhita age have not been preserved, and what we have now is only gāna of late origin.

In these compiled hymns of the Samaveda, there are frequent variations from the text of the Rig Veda. While singing, the verses are altered further by prolongation, repetition, insertion of syllables, various modulations, rests, and other modifications.

Yajur Veda

The tradition says: rgvih stuvanti, yajurbhhih yajanti -- rik mantras are for prayer, and Yajus are for oblation. Consequently the samhitā of this Veda contains mantras which are used in yajna. However, most of these mantras are a collection from Rigveda.

There are two versions of the samhitās of the Yajurveda: Shukla (white) and Krishna (black). Both contain verses necessary for rituals, but Krishna Yajurveda includes the Brahmana prose commentary within the samhita, while the Shukla Yajurveda contains the Brahmana as separate texts. However, both contain the same number of verses, 1975. Also, the priest associated with both of them is known as Adhvaryu. The job of these priest is to pour oblation in the sacrificial fire during a yajna.

Shukla Yajurveda: There are two (nearly identical) shakhas of the Shukla Yajurveda: Madhyandiniya, and Kanva. Both are known as Vajasaneyi Samhita. The former is popular in North India, whereas the latter is more

popular in the South. It has forty adhyaya (sections), and it contains the hymns used in various yajnas like, New and Full Moon sacrifices, Agnihotra , Soma yajna , Vajapeya and Rajasuya (two variants of the Soma sacrifice), construction of yajnavedi, the altars and hearths, Sautramani (it was originally a ritual to counteract the effects of excessive Soma-drinking), Ashvamedha, Purushamedha, Sarvamedha, Pitriyajna, and Pravargya.

The last, 40th chapter, is Isa Upanishad, which is an exception to the character of the work.

Krishna Yajurveda: There are four recension of the Krishna ("black" or "dark") Yajurveda: Taittirīya samhita, Maitrayani samhita, Kathaka samhita, and Kapisthala katha samhita. Each of these recension has a Brahmana associated with it, and some of them also have Aranyakas, Upanishads Shrautasutras, and Grihyasutras.

The best known of these recensions is the Taittiriya, which consists of seven books or kandas, divided in chapters or prapathaka. These are further subdivided into individual hymns. Some of these mantras have gained particular eminence in Hinduism. The most important of these mantras is the Gaytri mantra. Viswamitra is credited as the seer of this most famous mantra of Hinduism.

Atharva Veda

With its 5987 hymns collected in 20 kandas and 731 sections, the Atharva Veda is much longer than the Sama and Yajur, and is nearly half the size of Rig Veda.

Unlike the other Vedas, it contains a lot of prose, which are all original composition. However, most of its poetic hymns come from the Rig Veda (about one-seventh of the whole Atharva Veda). This Veda comes in two shakha: Shaunaka and Pippalada.

During a sacrifice, the priest belonging to Atharva Veda is known as Brahma. His duty is to ensure perfection in the yajna, and also to check the correctness of the chanting of the hymns. It was the normal practise of Brahma to collect half of the offerings made during the sacrifice.

The mantras of Atharva Veda were not directly used in any sacrifice, so the other three Vedas came to be known as trayee. Due to this many scholars (European) wrongly concluded that Atharva Veda was a later creation. The fact is that the hymns of this Veda belong to a particular class of metre, called chhanda, and are used primarily as magical spells and incantations. Considering the strong orthodox nature of the Brahmins (who would have

never allowed a supervisor from an inferior background, and who also took away half of the total offerings!), the overall content of Atharva Veda, it is naive to conclude that Atharva Veda was a later addition.

Some of the charms described in Atharva Veda are for fever, cough, jaundice, bodily pain, hereditary diseases, leprosy, worms in children, poison, snake bite, mania etc. They also contain charms to grow long hair, for a healthy life, prosperity, for getting a bride, for getting a son, killing one's enemy etc. The book also contains prayers of penances for various sins.

Interestingly, Atharva Veda has no Aranyaka attached to it.

Shabda Brahman: The Fountainhead of Creation

Hindus believe that the Vedas are apaurusheya, i.e., 'not created by any person'; sage or scholar. It is their belief that God Himself breathed out the Vedas before the creation of the universe. In turn, when Brahma began to create, He made use of Veda and started the new cycle of creation in the same order and style as it existed in the previous cycle.

The process of creation and its relation to the Vedas has been beautifully explained by Swami Vivekananda in his various speeches, dialogues and writings. Here is mentioned his exposition in brief.

'A word is Veda, if I can pronounce it rightly. Then it will immediately produce the [desired] effect. This mass of Vedas eternally exists and all the world is the manifestation of this mass of words. Then when the cycle ends, all this manifestation of energy becomes finer and finer, becomes only words, then thought. In the next cycle, first the thought changes into words and then out of those words [the whole universe] is produced. If there is something here that is not in the Vedas, that is your delusion. It does not exist.

'Veda means the sum total of eternal truths; the Vedic Rishis experienced those truths; they can be experienced only by seers of the supersensuous and not by common men like us. That is why in the Vedas the term Rishi means "the seer of the truth of the Mantras"....Veda is of the nature of Shabda or of idea. It is but the sum total of ideas. Shabda, according to the old Vedic meaning of the term, is the subtle idea, which reveals itself by taking the gross form later on. So owing to the dissolution of the creation the subtle seeds of the future creation become involved in the Veda. Accordingly, in the Puranas you find that during the first Divine Incarnation, the Minavatara, the Veda is first made manifest. The Vedas having been first revealed in this Incarnation, the other creative manifestations followed. Or in other words, all the created objects began to take concrete shape out of the Shabdas or ideas in the Veda. For in Shabda or idea, all gross objects have

their subtle forms. Creation had proceeded in the same way in all previous cycles or Kalpas. This you find in the Sandhya Mantra of the Vedas: " The Creator projected the sun, the moon, the earth, the atmosphere, the heaven, and the upper spheres in the same manner and process as in previous cycles."

'...Supposing this jug breaks into pieces; does the idea of a jug become null and void? No. Because, the jug is the gross effect, while the idea, "jug", is the subtle state of the Shabda-state of the jug. In the same way, the Shabda-state of every object is its subtle state, and the things we see, hear, touch, or perceive in any manner are the gross manifestations of entities in the subtle or Shabda state. Just as we may speak of the effect and its cause. Even when the whole creation is annihilated, the Shabda, as the consciousness of the universe or the subtle reality of all concrete things, exists in Brahman as the cause. At the point of creative manifestation, this sum total of causal entities vibrates into activity, as it were, and as being the sonant, material substance of it all, the eternal, primal sound of "Om" continues to come out of itself. And then from the causal totality comes out first the subtle image or Shabda-form of each particular thing and then its gross manifestation. Now that causal Shabda, or word-consciousness, is Brahman, and it is the Veda.

'... even if all the jugs in the universe were to be destroyed, the idea or Shabda, "jug", would still exist. So if the universe be destroyed--I mean if all the things making up the universe be smashed to atoms--why should not the ideas or Shabdas, representing all of them in consciousness, be still existing? And why cannot a second creation be supposed to come out of them in time?

'... nothing is produced if you or I cry out like that; but a jug must be revealed if the idea of it rises in Brahman which is perfect in Its creative determinations. When we see even those established in the practice of religion (Sadhakas) bring about by will-power things otherwise impossible to happen, what to speak of Brahman with perfect creativeness of will? At the point of creation Brahman becomes manifest as Shabda (Idea), and then assumes the form of "Nada" or "Om". At the next stage, the particular Shabdas or ideas, that variously existed in former cycles, such as Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, cow, man, etc., begin to come out of the "Om". As soon as these ideas appear in Brahman endowed with perfect will, the corresponding concrete things also appear, and gradually the diversified universe becomes manifest."

To highlight this power of the Vedic mantras to create anything, Valmiki in Ramayana (chapter 91), describes how Bharadwaja created quality food, dancing girls and other objects of enjoyment for the army of king Bharata when he was on his way to meet Sri Rama in exile.

The concept that ideas, words and the corresponding objects are related, is one of the essential pillars of Hinduism. This concept was later taken up by the Vaishnavas who proclaimed that the name and the named object are same. Sri Ramakrishna used to quite often mention this fact of God and His name being the same.

Creation according to two hymns of the Vedas

Purusha Suktam (RV X.90) and Nasadiya Suktam (RV X.129) describe the process of creation in two different ways. Purusha Suktam describes creation as having come out from, and by Purusha (God).

"The universes, past, present and future, are but manifestations of the Supreme Lord who expands Himself as the Purusa. He is the Lord of immortality but has manifest Himself as the Purusa in the universe so that the jivas may enjoy material fruits. '.

"The past, present and future universes are manifestations of the Lord’s powers, but the Lord Himself is much greater. The material creation is but one quarter portion, and the eternal nature in the spiritual sky exists in three quarters portion.

"The three quarters portion of the Lord transcended the material portion. The Lord in the one quarter portion manifested the universe again, as He had done repeatedly before. The Lord of the one quarter portion began the work of creation, by going all around, taking the form of all animate and inanimate objects." (RV X.90.2-4)

This concept was taken up by the later philosophers to describe how God creates the universe.

Nasadiya Suktam begins with the concept of "pure existence" described as "in the beginning there was neither nothingness (i.e. creation did not come out of vacuum), nor was there any existence (i.e. there was nothing that could be known through senses or the mind)". The first step of creation was when "desire descended on it. That was the primal seed, born of the mind."

It was from this point that the subtle became gross, and then acted on itself. Thus Prana (the cosmic energy) hammered at Akasha (the finest first particles) to produce gross matter which ultimately to become the universe.

Swami Vivekananda loved this idea of creation so much that he translated the hymn into Sanskrit, and used its various concepts and imagery freely in his talks. One of the listeners of his talks was Mr Nicholas Tesla, who was a highly respected scientist and an electrical engineer of his time. Swamiji

wrote about him, 'Mr. Tesla was charmed to hear about the Vedantic Prana and Akasha and the Kalpas, which according to him are the only theories modern science can entertain. Now both Akasha and Prana again are produced from the cosmic Mahat, the Universal Mind, the Brahma or Ishvara.'

Interestingly, Nasadiya Suktam throws up its hands in despair at the perplexity of creation and concludes with:
But, after all, who knows, and who can say
Whence it all came, and how creation happened?
The gods themselves are later than creation,
So who knows truly whence it has arisen?

This inexplicability of creation through inferential knowledge is fundamental in Hinduism.

Summing up

The Vedas set the boundary for Hinduism. Every new spiritual thought of the Hindus must have the sanction of the Vedas. Fortunately, they give tremendous freedom and flexibility to its adherents.

They contain everything that is essential for a man to live a meaningful, dignified and worthy life. They encourage the adherents to earn well and live well, and also goad them towards a highly moral life. They teach the ways and means to achieve anything that a person may be craving for, and they also lead the aspirants toward the Supreme Reality.

In these words of God, no one is left out. There is something for everybody. Even people with strong passions and desires find a way to have their wishes fulfilled through various sacrifices. This is how such people are slowly led towards a higher life.

Above all, the Vedas are unique in the world of scriptures, since they alone proclaim that one has to outgrow everything, including the Vedas themselves, to attain the Supreme.

Vidhi - Vedic Injunctions

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Vivekachudamani of Adi Sankara

[Crest Jewel of Discrimination]
A Summary - Based on the Commentary of Pujya Sri Jagadguru Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami
By S. N. Sastri

Introduction

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada has blessed the world with an enormous legacy of invaluable gems. These can be grouped under three broad categories. The first category, meant for the intellectually most advanced, comprises his commentaries (bhaashya) on the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita, known collectively as the prasthaanatrayam. The second category consists of independent works, known as prakarana granthas, which expound the gist of the upanishads in simple language. These vary in length from half a verse to one thousand verses. In the third category fall devotional hymns addressed to various deities. Through these devotional hymns also the teachings of Vedanta are conveyed. There is a wrong impression among some persons, particularly Western scholars, that Sri Sankara did not attach importance to devotion to a personal God. On the basis of this view they conclude that the devotional hymns cannot be works of Sri Sankara. This view is belied by Sri Sankara's own statements in his commentaries, which are accepted by all to be his works. For example, in his commentary on the Gita, 2.39, he explains Krishna's words to Arjuna thus - "You will become free from bondage by the attainment of knowledge through God's grace". Again, in18.65 - "Knowing for certain that liberation is the definite result of devotion to God, one should be intent only on surrender to God". Moreover, Sri Sankara is well known for having re - established the worship of the supreme God - head in His six aspects, and is referred to as the Shanmatasthapaka.

Unlike the Sankhyas who gave importance only to the Jnaanakaanda and the Purva Mimamsakas who dismissed the Upanishads as mere arthavada or eulogy, Sankara established in his bhaashyas that both the kaandas have validity, though at different stages of the aspirant's spiritual progress. In his bhaashya on Br. Up. 4.4.2 he says - "All the obligatory rites serve as means to liberation through the attainment of Self - knowledge. Hence we see that the ultimate purpose of the two parts of the Vedas, that dealing with rites and that dealing with Self - knowledge, is the same". In many places in the Karma kanda there are clear indications that the ultimate goal of life is liberation.

What is Advaita Vedanta? Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan says in his book 'Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence' - "We believe that Advaita is not a sectarian doctrine. It is the culmination of all doctrines, the crown of all views.

Though other views may imagine themselves to be opposed to Advaita, Advaita is opposed to none. As Gaudapada, a pre - Sankara teacher of Advaita, says, Advaita has no quarrel with any system of philosophy. While the pluralistic world - views may be in conflict with one another, Advaita is not opposed to any of them. It recognizes the measure of truth that there is in each of them; but only, that truth is not the whole. Hostility arises out of partial vision. When the whole truth is realized, there can be no hostility. (Mandukya Karika, III. 17 &18; IV. 5)".

The core of Advaita is that Brahman is the only reality. 'Reality' is defined as that which does not undergo any change at any time. By this test, Brahman, which is absolutely changeless and eternal, is alone real. The world keeps on changing all the time and so it cannot be considered as real. At the same time, we cannot dismiss it as unreal, because it is actually experienced by us. The example of a rope being mistaken for a snake in dim light is used to explain this. The snake so seen produces the same reaction, such as fear and trembling of the limbs, as a real snake would. It cannot therefore be said to be totally unreal. At the same time, on examination with the help of a lamp it is found that the snake never existed and that the rope alone was there all the time. The snake cannot be described as both real and unreal, because these two contradictory qualities cannot exist in the same entity. It must therefore be said that the snake is neither real nor unreal. Just as the snake appears because of ignorance of the fact that there is only a rope, this world appears to exist because of our ignorance of Brahman. Thus the world is also neither real nor unreal; it is 'mithya' or 'anirvachaniya', meaning 'indescribable'. Just as the snake is superimposed on the rope, the world is superimposed on Brahman. Our ignorance of Brahman is what is called avidya or ajnana or nescience. This nescience has two powers, the power to conceal the reality, known as aavarana sakti and the power to project the unreal, known as vikshepasakti. Because of these two powers, nescience not only covers Brahman, but it further projects the universe and makes it appear real. The world has no reality apart from Brahman, just as the snake has no reality apart from the rope. When the knowledge of Brahman arises, the world is seen as a mere appearance of Brahman. Another example may be taken to explain this. Ornaments of different sizes and shapes are made out of one gold bar. Their appearance and the use for which they are meant vary, but the fact that they are all really only gold, in spite of the different appearances and uses, cannot be denied. The appearance may change, a bangle may be converted into rings, but the gold always remains as gold. Similarly, on the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman (which is the same as the Self), though the different forms continue to be seen by the Jnaani, he sees them all only as appearances of the one Brahman. Thus the perception of difference and the consequences of such perception, such as looking upon some as favourable and others as the opposite, and the consequent efforts to retain or get what is favourable and to get rid of or avoid what is not favourable, come

to an end. This is the state of liberation even while living, which is known as Jivanmukti.

The Jiva, or individual, is none but Brahman, but because of identification with the body, mind and senses he looks upon himself as different from Brahman and as a limited being, subject to joys and sorrows caused by external factors. This identification with the body, mind and senses is what is called bondage. In reality the Jiva is the pure Brahman and is different from the body - mind complex. When this truth is realized as an actual experience, the identification with the body - mind complex ceases. This is liberation. Thus liberation is not the attainment of a state which did not exist previously, but only the realization of what one has always been. The illusory snake never existed. What existed even when the snake was seen was only the rope. Similarly, bondage has no real existence at all. Even when we are ignorant of Brahman and think of ourselves as limited by the body, we are really none but the infinite Brahman. Liberation is thus only the removal of the wrong identification with the body, mind and senses. The attainment of the state of liberation - in - life or Jivanmukti is the goal of human life according to the Upanishads.

The method followed in Vedanta to explain the nature of Brahman is known as 'superimposition and denial' (adhyaaropa and apavaada). Only an object that has a quality or an activity or a relationship with some other known object can be described by words. Brahman is devoid of all these and so it cannot be described directly. The world, with which we are familiar, is therefore taken as the starting point and we are gradually led from the known to the unknown and unknowable that is Brahman. It cannot be known because it can never be objectified. It is the eternal subject in whose mere presence the body, mind and the sense organs function. It is pure consciousness and it is the reflection of this consciousness that makes the body, mind and senses appear to be conscious.

The world is called prapancha because it has five characteristics, namely, existence (asti), manifestation (bhaati), lovability (priyam), name (naama), and form (roopa). Of these, the last two are different for each entity or object. They are always subject to change and are the products of maaya. The unenlightened person looks upon this aggregate of five characteristics as the world. The first three constitute the essential nature of Brahman (or the Self) which is Existence - Consciousness - Bliss. The enlightened person knows that this Brahman is the only reality and that the world is only an appearance on this Brahman which is the substratum. The Upanishads speak of Brahman as the cause of the world, but this is only to enable us to understand the ultimate truth that the world has no reality. Sri Sankara makes this clear in his bhaashya on Br.up.2.1.20 : "Therefore, the mention in all the Vedanta texts of th eorigin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe is only to strengthen

our idea of Brahman being a homogeneous entity, and not to tell us that the origin, etc, is real. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that a part of the indivisible, transcendental Supreme Self becomes the relative, individual self, because the Supreme Self is intrinsically without parts". This is the method of superimposition and subsequent denial. Ultimately the nature of Brahman as the only reality is brought out by the famous words in the Br.Up, 'neti, neti', ('not this, not this'). When the whole universe, which is only a projection by nescience, is negated what remains is the eternal, immutable, non - dual Brahman.

Vivekachudamani is a prakarana grantha. It consists of 581 verses. It is not divided into chapters or sections. It is in the form of a dialogue between an ardent seeker and his Guru. The fundamental principle in Vedanta is that its teachings should be imparted only to those who sincerely seek it and approach a Guru with deference and faith. In this work the Guru proceeds step by step, answering the doubts of the disciple with patience until at the end the disciple attains realization.

The actual text will be taken up in the subsequent pages. Though this is entitled 'A Summary', what is proposed is not only to give the meaning of the verses, but to further supplement it by explanatory notes wherever necessary.

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In the first sloka Sri Sankara pays obeisance to God and his own Guru. The sloka says: I bow down to Govinda who is the goal of all Vedanta, who is beyond words and thought, who is supreme bliss itself and who is my Guru. By the word Govinda the supreme Lord as well as Sri Sankara's Guru Sri Govinda bhagavatpada are meant. It is laid down in our tradition that the Guru should be looked upon as God Himself and not as a mere human being. In his work entitled Satasloki, in the very first sloka Sri Sankara declares that the Sadguru is incomparable in all the three worlds. He says:

"There is nothing in all the three worlds that can be compared to the Sadguru who imparts the knowledge of the Self. The legendary Philosopher's stone may perhaps be suggested as an apt comparison, because it has the capacity to convert a piece of iron into gold, just as the Sadguru converts an ordinary disciple into an enlightened person. But this comparison cannot stand because, while the Sadguru makes the disciple another Guru like himself, the Philosopher'ss tone does not have the power to convert a piece of iron into another Philosopher's stone like itself. Therefore the Sadguru is incomparable and his glory transcends the world".

Human Birth is Precious

After paying obeisance to God and Guru, Sri Sankara says that birth as a human being is difficult to get. A jiva goes through innumerable births in the form of various other creatures before being born as a human being. Even after birth as a human being, to have an inclination to study the scriptures, to attain discrimination between the Self and the not - Self, and ultimately to attain liberation, are the results of punya acquired in innumerable past lives.

Three things are very rare, and attained only through the grace of God: the quality of being a human being in the true sense of the term (not mere birth as a human being), an intense yearning for liberation, and association with a great soul. A person who, in spite of having the advantages of birth in a cultured family and study of the Vedas does not strive for liberation wastes his precious life. Liberation cannot be attained through acquisition of wealth or through mere performance of rituals laid down in the Vedas or through noble deeds, as long as they are performed with the desire to get some personal benefit. This should not be understood to mean that rituals and noble deeds are to be discarded. On the other hand, Sri Sankara stresses in many places that the actions ordained by the Vedas should be performed in order to attain purity of mind. If the same actions are performed as karma yoga, that is, without desire for any personal benefit for the performer and as an offering to God, they will lead to purity of mind. Even a good action, whether ritualistic or worldly, performed with the desire to derive some personal benefit or just fame, creates bondage. Even the acquisition of punya by the performance of good deeds produces bondage because the person has to be born again in order to enjoy the results of his good actions. So a spiritual aspirant has to perform actions in such a way that they do not produce even punya. The Gita says that no one can remain without performing action even for a moment. Since the performance of actions is inevitable, one has to perform them in such a way that they do not produce either punya or paapa. The method of achieving this is karma yoga. Sri Sankara explains in his commentary on the Gita that in the word 'karmayoga' the word 'yoga' is used in the sense of the 'means to attain union with Brahman'. So 'karmayoga' means action performed in such a way that it becomes the means to union with Brahman, which is liberation. The statement in Bhagavadgita, 2.50, "yogah karmasu kaushalam' is interpreted by Sri Sankara in his Bhashya thus: Yoga is skillfulness in action. The skillfulness consists in converting action which is by its very nature the cause of bondage into a means for removal of bondage. This means is karma yoga. Karma yoga purifies the mind. It is only a pure mind, that is, a mind free from desires, greed, infatuation etc., that is fit to receive the knowledge of the Self. Liberation is attained only through knowledge of one's real nature and not by actions alone, whether Vedic or worldly. For attaining knowledge of the Self one should give up the hankering after worldly pleasures and approach a

Guru who is an enlightened person. He should then enquire into the nature of the Self, in accordance with the instructions of his Guru.

A man who has mistaken a rope for a snake in dim light is frightened and screams for help. His fear will disappear only if he finds out the real nature of the object in front with the light of a lamp. No action to drive away the illusory snake will help. Similarly, one should enquire into one's own real nature by hearing the scriptures from his Guru (sravanam), reflecting on what he has heard to remove doubts (mananam) and meditating on the teachings (nididhyaasanam).

Why liberation cannot be the result of any action.

The results of all actions fall under four categories only: production, attainment, modification, and purification. Brahman is ever - existent and so it is not something to be produced. We are always Brahman even when we do not know it and so it is not something to be attained. Brahman ever exists as changeless and so it is not something to be attained by modifying something. It is ever pure and so it is not to be got by purifying something. As we know from actual experience, anything brought into existence by action has a beginning and has therefore an end also. But liberation is permanent. Because of all these reasons liberation cannot be the result of any action. Liberation is nothing but the removal of our ignorance about our real nature. Ignorance can be removed only by knowledge and not by any other means.

The spiritual aspirant has to acquire certain preliminary qualifications known as saadhana - chatushtaya. These will be described in the next article.

Four Preliminary Requisites (Saadhana Chatushtayam)

In order that hearing, reflection and meditation may be fruitful, the aspirant should have acquired the four preliminary qualifications mentioned below.

The four requisites are (1) discrimination between the eternal and the non - eternal (nitya - anitya - vastu vivekah),(2) detachment towards all enjoyments in this world as well as in higher worlds like heaven (iha - amutra - phalabhoga - viraagah), (3) possession of the six virtues commencing with control of the mind (shamaadi shatka sampattih), and (4) intense yearning for liberation (mumukshutvam). Each of these is explained below.

(1) The firm conviction that Brahman alone is real and that the universe is illusory (mithyaa) is discrimination between the eternal and the non - eternal.

(2) Detachment is revulsion towards all objects of enjoyment in this world as well as in higher worlds, including one's own body.

(3) The six virtues starting with shama are - shama, dama, uparati, titikshaa, shraddhaa, samaadhaana. These are explained below.
(a) Withdrawing the mind from all sense - pleasures by realizing their harmful nature, and making it rest on one's objective (namely, the Self) is shama.
(b) Restraining the organs of sense and of action (jnaanendriya and karmendriya) is known as dama.
(c) When the mind ceases to function through the external organs, that state is uparati.
(d) Enduring all adversities without lament or anxiety and without seeking to counter them is titikshaa.
(e) Firm conviction about the truth of the scriptures and the teachings of the Guru is shraddhaa.
(f) The mind remaining firmly fixed in the attributeless Brahman is samaadhaana.

(4) The fourth requisite, mumukshutvam is intense yearning to become free from nescience (avidya) and its effect, bondage, by the realization of one's true nature. In his Bhashya on Gita,4.11 Sri Sankara says that itis impossible for a person to be a seeker of liberation and also a seeker of the fruits of action at the same time. From this it is clear that only a person who has attained total and intense detachment can be called a mumukshu. The definition of yogaarudha in Gita 6.4 as one who is free from attachment to sense - objects and actions and does not even think of them indicates that both these terms have the same meaning.

Of these, detachment and the yearning for liberation are the most important. Only if these two are strong, will the others like shama, etc, be fruitful. If detachment and desire for liberation are not very strong, the other qualities will be unreal like the water in a mirage and will be of no use.

In sloka 32 of Vivekachudamani it is said, "Among the various means for liberation, bhakti is the greatest". But the word 'bhakti' is not used here in the usual sense of devotion to a personal God. In this sloka itself bhakti is defined as 'continuous contemplation of one's essential nature - sva - svarupa - anusandhaana. According to the commentary of Swami Chandrasekhara Bharati this word means nididhyaasana or profound repeated meditation on the mahaavakya, which follows sravana, hearing the sruti from the Guru, and manana, reflecting on the same to remove all doubts.

In this context the specific meanings of these three words, sravana, manana, and nididhyaasana, as given in other authoritative works may be quoted because these words have a very important place in Vedanta: - -

Vedantasaara of Sadaananda, ch.5, para 182 - Hearing is the determination, by the application of the six characteristic signs, that the purport of the entire Vedanta is the non - dual Brahman. The six signs are - (1) the beginning and the conclusion, (2) repetition, (3) originality, (4)result, (5) eulogy and (6) demonstration. The Sanskrit terms for these are, respectively, upakramopasamhaara, abhyaasa, apoorvataa, phala, arthavaada, and upapatti. Each of these terms is explained below.

Vedantasaara, ch.5. para 185 - The term ' the beginning and the conclusion' means the presentation of the subject matter of a section at the beginning and at the end of the section. For example, in the sixth chapter of the Chhaandogya Upanishad, Brahman, which is the subject - matter of the chapter, is introduced at the beginning with the words, "One only without a second", etc. (6.2.1). At the end of the chapter Brahman is again spoken of in the words, "In It all that exists has its Self", etc. (6.8.7).

Para 186 - Repetition is the repeated presentation of the subject - matter in the section. In the same chapter, Brahman, the One without a second, is mentioned nine times by the sentence "Thou art That".

Para 187 - 'Originality' means that the subject - matter of the section is not known through any other source of knowledge. For instance, the subject matter of the above section, namely, Brahman, cannot be known through any source of knowledge other than the sruti.

Para188 - The 'result' is the utility of the subject - matter. For example, in the same section, we find the sentences" One who has a teacher realizes Brahman. He has to wait only as long as he is not freed from the body; then he is united with Brahman". (6.14.2). Here the utility of the knowledge is attainment of Brahman.

Para 189 - Eulogy is the praise of the subject - matter. The words in this section, "Did you ask for that instruction by which one knows what has not been known, etc" (6.1.3) are spoken in praise of Brahman.

Para 190 - Demonstrationis the reasoning in support of the subject - matter, adduced at different places in the same section. An example is - "My dear, as by one lump of clay all that is made of clay is known, every modification being only a name, and being real only as clay" - (6.4.1). This shows that the universe has no reality except as an apparent modification of Brahman, the only Reality.

Para 191 - Reflection is the constant thinking of Brahman, the One without a second, already heard about from the teacher, by making use of arguments in a constructive manner.

Para 192 - Meditation is keeping the mind fixed on the thought of Brahman, uninterrupted by any other thought.

The result achieved by 'hearing' etc.

'Hearing' removes the doubt whether the upanishadic text which is the pramaana purports to teach about Brahman or about some other entity. This doubt is known as pramaana - asambhaavanaa, or the doubt about the pramaana itself. The pramaana here is the upanishad.

'Reflection' removes the doubt whether Brahman and the jiva are identical or not. This doubt is called prameya - asambhaavanaa, doubt about the subject - matter.

'Meditation' is intended to remove wrong notions such as "The universe is real; the difference between Brahman and jiva is real", which are contrary to the teachings of the upanishads, by developing concentration of the mind. Such wrong notions are known as viparita - bhaavanaa.

Thus the purpose of hearing, reflection and meditation is the removal of obstacles in the form of doubts and wrong notions that stand in the way of the origination of Self - knowledge.

A person who has acquired the preliminary qualifications mentioned earlier should approach a Guru and seek his help. Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on the Mundakopanishad that no one should undertake the enquiry about Brahman without the help of a Guru. This is because the subject is very subtle and one is apt to misunderstand the scriptures.

Qualities of the Guru

The Guru should be well - versed in the scriptures, sinless, free from desires. The mind of the Guru is always fixed on Brahman. He is full of compassion. He is always intent on helping others without the expectation of anything in return. The disciple should approach the Guru with humility and pray to him to instruct him on the means to attain liberation. The Guru tells such an earnest seeker that he is in reality none other than the supreme Self and that all sufferings are due only to ignorance of his real nature. This ignorance can be removed by the knowledge that will arise by a proper enquiry into the import of the Upanishads. The disciple then asks the following seven questions.
1. What is bondage?
2. How did it arise?
3. How does it continue?
4. How can it be eradicated?
5. What is the not - Self?

6. Who is the Paramaatmaa?
7. How can we distinguish between the two?
These questions are answered in the rest of this treatise.

Self-effort Stressed

On hearing the questions put by the disciple the Guru tells him that by his intense yearning for liberation he has sanctified his lineage. Now the Guru stresses the importance of personal effort by giving several examples. If a father has incurred debts, his sons and others can relieve him by paying off the debts, but liberation can be attained only by one's own effort and not by anybody else's help. Even the Guru can only show the way. If a person carrying a heavy load is tired, some other person can take it over, but the suffering caused by hunger can be assuaged only if the person himself eats. A person can get cured of a disease only if he himself takes the medicine. The nature of the Reality can be known only if the person himself acquires the knowledge free from all doubt by his own effort by the practice of hearing, reflection and meditation and not by merely hearing a learned person talk about it. The beauty of the moon can be seen and enjoyed only through one's own eyes and not by somebody else seeing and describing it. This example shows that one should himself attain the experience of the Reality and mere intellectual knowledge acquired from books and teachers is not enough. Who, other than the person himself, can liberate one from the bondage caused by ignorance, desire and actions even in millions of years? Desire, action, and rebirth form a continuous vicious circle, each being the cause of the next. This circle can be broken only by the realization of the Self. Liberation cannot be attained through the Yoga of Patanjali or the Sankhya of Kapila because they give only dualistic knowledge and not the knowledge of the non - dual Brahman. Nor can liberation be attained by any action including Vedic rituals, as already explained earlier. Knowledge of the upasanas (meditations on Saguna Brahman) described in the Upanishads too cannot give liberation. Only the knowledge of the identity of the individual self with Brahman will give liberation. Even here it is wrong to say that realization of Brahman is an effect of the knowledge of Brahman. If it is an effect it will, like all effects, be subject to destruction at some time. Knowledge of Brahman does not make one Brahman. It only removes nescience or avidya and reveals the fact that he was always Brahman, which was not known earlier. Scholarship in the Sastras and the ability to give brilliant discourses on them can help to earn fame and a comfortable life, but not liberation.

As long as the supreme Self is not known, mere study of the Sastras is fruitless. Once the supreme Self is known, the study of the Sastras does not serve any further purpose. The idea is that the study of the Sastras is for attaining Self - realization. Until it is attained the purpose of the study is not achieved. After realization the Sastras are no longer necessary. Mere study

of the words of the scriptures only confuses the mind. One should, with effort, learn the inner truth of the scriptures from a Guru.

For a person who has been bitten by the snake of ignorance the only medicine is knowledge of Brahman. How can the Vedas, Sastras, mantras and other medicines help? A person cannot be cured of a disease unless he takes the appropriate medicine. Mere repetition of the name of the medicine cannot cure him. Similarly, release from bondage can be attained only by direct realization and not by merely repeating the word 'Brahman'. Without negating the world as unreal and without knowing the truth of one's nature, how can liberation be attained by mere repetition of words? In order to retrieve a treasure buried under the earth one must first of all know the exact location of the treasure from a knowledgeable person. Then he should dig and remove the earth, stones, etc., that cover the treasure. Merely calling out to the treasure will not make it come out. Similarly, the pure Reality which is covered by the products of ignorance (the body, mind, and senses) can be attained only by hearing the sruti from a competent person who has realized Brahman, and by reflection and meditation and not by perverted logic. Therefore each one should himself strive for liberation with utmost effort, just as a sick man strives hard to get cured.

After stressing personal effort and explaining in detail what a seeker should do, the Acharya encourages the disciple by telling him that the questions he has asked are excellent, in accord with the scriptures, brief and full of meaning. The answer to these questions should be known by all seekers of liberation.

After this the Guru first takes up the fourth question, how can bondage be got rid of, because this is the most important subject.

Means to Liberation

The first requisite for a spiritual aspirant is intense detachment towards all things that are impermanent, i.e. everything other than the Self. Then come control of the senses, control of the mind, etc. He should give up all actions motivated by desire for his own benefit. That means that all actions should be performed in the spirit of karma yoga. He should hear the teachings of the sruti from a teacher, reflect on the teachings to remove all doubts, and meditate on them. All these should be done continuously over a long period.

Discrimination between the Self and the not - Self

The seventh question asked by the disciple is now taken up. The Acharya first takes up the physical body which everyone knows about and which everyone refers to as 'I'.

The physical body is made up of seven substances; marrow, bone, fat, flesh, blood, skin and the cuticle. All these are the products of the food and drinks consumed. This is explained in Chandogyopanishad as follows: - -

Ch.up.6.5.1. SankaraBhashya (S.B) - Food, when eaten, becomes divided in three ways. The grossest portion of the food turns into faeces. The medium constituent becomes flesh. The subtlest part, having reached the heart, enters into the fine nerves named hitaa, becomes transformed into the mind - stuff and nourishes the mind. It therefore follows that the mind is made of matter. It is not considered as eternal and part less as held by the Vaiseshikas. (It is of the size of the body - madhyama parimaana).

Ch.up.6.5.2.S.B - Water (or any liquid) when drunk becomes divided in three ways. The grossest portion becomes urine. The medium constituent becomes blood. The subtlest part becomes the vital force (praana). Ch.up.6.7.1 says - "The vital force is made up of water. It will depart from him who does not drink water".

Ch.up.6.5.3.S.B - Butter, oil, etc, when consumed, become divided in three ways. The grossest portion becomes bone. The medium constituent becomes marrow, the greasy substance inside the bones. The subtlest part becomes the (subtle) organ of speech (vaak). It is a well known fact that by the consumption oil, butter and the like, speech becomes clear and powerful.

The physical body is the basis of the delusion in the form of 'I' and 'mine'. It is made up of various components as stated above. Just as a house made up of various materials is meant for its owner, so also the body made up of various components is for the atma which is the owner of the body. So the atma is different from the body. Moreover, the body is always undergoing changes and is impermanent and so it cannot be the atma which is changeless and eternal.

The gross body is made up of the five gross elements. The process by which the five subtle elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water and earth, become gross elements is known as 'pancheekaranam' or quintuplicate. The process is described by Swami Vidyaranya in Panchadasi as below: -

Panchadasi.1.26,27 - The omnipotent Lord combined the five subtle elements by the process known as 'pancheekaranam' (quintuplicate) and produced gross elements to provide the jivas (individual souls) with physical bodies and objects of enjoyment. The process of combination of the subtle elements is this. Each subtle element is divided into two equal parts. The second half of each such element is again divided into four equal parts (i.e. to get one - eighth of each element). Then the first half of each element is combined with one - eighth of each of the other four elements to make a gross element. The

result is that in a gross element of earth one half is earth itself and the other half is made up of the elements of water, fire, air and space in equal shares. Similarly with the other four gross elements.

The five essences of the subtle elements, namely, sound which is the essence of ether, touch which is the essence of air, colour which is the essence of fire, taste which is the essence of water, and smell which is the essence of earth, become the objects of sense which are experienced by the respective sense - organs. Human beings who are attached to objects of senses continue to transmigrate. As long as there is attachment to sense - objects there is no hope whatsoever of liberation. A person who attempts to cross the ocean of transmigratory existence without acquiring total detachment is sure to be seized by the crocodile of desire and drowned. One who has killed the crocodile in the form of desire for sense pleasures with the sword of detachment can alone hope to cross the ocean of samsara without obstruction. The aspirant for liberation should follow the teachings of his Guru and cultivate detachment. He should shun worldly pleasures, equating them to poison. He should cultivate with great eagerness the virtues of contentment, compassion, forbearance, honesty, straight forwardness, calmness and self - control. He who aspires to realize the Self while continuing to indulge in sense pleasures is like a man who tries to cross a river on the back of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood. He is sure to be swallowed up by the crocodile midway. For the seeker of liberation attachment to his body, wife, children, etc., is as bad as death. He alone deserves liberation who has completely rid himself of attachment. The importance of detachment has been stressed in a number of verses by the Acharya. In order to create dispassion it is pointed out that the gross body is despicable because it is made up of revolting substances such as skin, flesh, blood, blood - vessels, fat, marrow and bones and contains within it urine and faecal matter. The gross body is produced by one's own karma in past lives. It is the instrument for all worldly experiences which the jiva has to undergo. In the waking state the gross body experiences gross objects through the sense organs. A person's entire contact with the external world is through the gross body. The gross body is to the jiva what a house is to its owner. The gross body undergoes birth, old age and death. It is qualified by stoutness, leanness, and the like. The ideas of caste and station (varna and asrama) apply to it. It is afflicted by diseases. It is subjected to worship, honour, dishonour, etc.

After dealing with the gross body and stressing the need for giving up attachment to it, the subtle body is taken up for examination. This will be dealt with in the next article.

Subtle Body

The sense of hearing, the sense of touch, the sense of sight, the sense of taste and the sense of smell are known as jnanendriyas or organs of perception. It is through these organs that external objects are experienced. These organs are produced from the sattva part of space, air, fire, water and earth respectively. It must be noted that these are not the physical organs, such as ear, skin, etc, in the physical body. These physical organs are known as golaka. The indriyas are the subtle counterparts of these physical organs and form part of the subtle body. The presiding deities of these five indriyas are, respectively, the deities of the quarters, the deity of air, the sun, Varuna (the god of the waters) and the two Asvini devas. (See alsoPanchadasi.1.19).

It may be noted that each sense - organ is produced from the particular subtle element whose distinctive quality it has the power to reveal. For example, the organ of hearing which is produced from the sattva part of the subtle element, space, reveals sound, which is the distinctive quality of space. The organ of smell is produced from the sattva part of the subtle element earth whose distinctive quality, smell, it reveals. Sri Sankara says in his commentary on Br.up.2.4.11 - The sruti considers the organs to be of the same category as the objects, not of a different category. The organs are but modes of the objects they perceive.

The subtle counterparts of the vocal organ, hands, feet, anus and genitals are known as karmendriyas or the organs of action. These are produced from the rajas part of the five subtle elements. The presiding deities of these organs are, in order, the deity of Fire, Indra, Vishnu, Yama and Prajaapati.

From the sattva parts of all the five subtle elements together is produced the antahkaranam or internal organ which is known by four different names according to the different functions performed by it. The four names are - manas, buddhi, chittam and ahamkaara. (Sometimes only two names, manas and buddhi, are mentioned, as in Panchadasi.1.20, the other two being included in them). These four functions are explained in Vivekachudamani, verses 95 and 96 thus. When any situation arises, a person first considers various alternatives to explain or understand the situation. When the internal organ performs this function of cogitation it is known as the manas or mind. When ultimately a determination is made or a decision is taken, it is known as buddhi or intellect. The function of storing experiences in memory is called chittam. Behind all these three functions there is the notion of 'I' in the form 'I cogitate', 'I decide', and 'I remember'. This 'I - ness' or ego is named ahamkaara. Very often the word 'mind' is also used to denote the antahkaranam as a whole, when these distinctions are not relevant. We shall use the word 'mind' in this sense hereafter.

There is difference of opinion among Advaitins on the question whether the mind is an indriya, organ, or not. Vaachaspati Misra, the author of Bhaamati, considers the mind as an indriya. Prakaasaatma muni, the author of Vivarana, takes the view that the mind is not an indriya. The author of Vedanta paribhaashaa also takes the same view. This point assumes importance when the question as to how realization takes place through the mahaa vaakyas is considered.

From a combination of the rajas aspect of the five subtle elements, is produced praana, or vital air. This has five divisions, according to the function performed. These are described in the Bhashya on Prasna upanishad, 3.5, thus: - He (praana) places apaana, a division of himself, in the two lower apertures, as engaged in the work of ejecting the excreta. Praana himself, who occupies the position of the sovereign, resides in the eyes and the ears and issues out through the mouth and nostrils. In the navel is samaana, which is so called because it assimilates all that is eaten or drunk, distributes them equally in all parts of the body and effects digestion. Udaana, another division of praana, moves throughout the body and functions upwards. It leads the soul out of the body at the time of death and takes it to other worlds according to one's punyaand paapa. Vyaana regulates praana and apaana and is the cause of actions requiring strength. (See also Br.up.1.5.3.S.B).

Br.up.3.9.26.S.B. - The force called praana would go out (through the mouth and nostrils) if it were not held back by apaana. The force called apaana would also depart (through the lower orifice) if it were not held back by vyaana. All these three forces would go out in all directions, if they were not fixed to udaana. All these four forces rest on samaana.

Taitt.up. 2.2.S.B. Praana is that aspect which goes out through the mouth and nostrils.

Vedantasaara - Paras84 and 85 - According to Sankhya, there are five more vital forces known as naaga, koorma, krikala, devadatta and dhananjaya. Their functions are, respectively, causing vomiting, winking, creating hunger, producing yawning and nourishing the body.

The aggregate of these eight, namely,
(1) the five organs of action (karmendriyas),
(2) the five organs of perception (jnanendriyas),
(3) the five forms of praana or vital air,
(4) the five subtle elements beginning with space,
(5) the four divisions of the antahkaranam (manas, buddhi, chittam and ahamkaara),
(6) avidya,
(7) desire, and

(8) the impressions of all actions,
is what is called the subtle body or sookshma sarira. This is also known as the linga sarira. The word 'linga' is derived from the root 'ligi'which means 'that which reminds'. The subtle body reminds us of the atma and so it is called linga sarira. The word 'sarira' is used in the sense of 'that which perishes'. The subtle body will cease to exist on the realization of the self and so it is also called a sarira though it does not have any shape or form like the gross body. The subtle body is made up of the five subtle elements as they exist before the process of quintuplicate described earlier. It has in it the impressions of past actions. It is the experiencer of the fruits of actions. It is the beginningless limiting adjunct (upadhi) of the atma. The dream state is the special state of the subtle body. In this state the gross body is not active, but the subtle body projects various objects and experiences based on the vasanas in it. In this state the atma itself illumines the objects projected, since the sense organs do not function then and there are no sources of light like the sun.

The intellect (buddhi) is the limiting adjunct of the atma. The atma is the mere witness of all the modifications of the intellect, but is not tainted by the modifications or their results. It is compared to the sun which enables all creatures to act by providing light, but is not in the least affected by their good or bad actions. The atma is therefore described as unattached. The subtle body is the cause of all activities. It is the instrument of the self, just like the tools for a carpenter. A carpenter cannot do his work without his tools. So too all activities are possible for the atma only when it is associated with the subtle body. In deep sleep the atma is not associated with the subtle body and so there is no action. However, even in the waking state the atma does not perform any action but is a mere witness; it is wrongly looked upon as a doer and an enjoyer because of identification with the subtle body, as a result of ignorance.

The qualities such as blindness, poor vision, clear vision, etc., belong only to the eye and not to the atma. Similarly, deafness, dumbness, etc., pertain only to the respective organs. Inhalation of breath, exhalation, yawning, sneezing, secretion, departure from the body on death, hunger and thirst are qualities or activities of the vital air (praana). It is the internal organ that experiences sound, etc., through the respective sense organs. Because of the reflection of the atma which is pure consciousness in the internal organ, the latter itself appears to be conscious, like the moon appearing as bright because of the reflection of the light of the sun on it.

Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on Br.up.4.3.7 : - -

Just as an emerald or any other gem, dropped into a vessel of milk, imparts its luster to the milk, so does this luminous self, being subtler than even the mind and the intellect, impart consciousness to the whole body, mind and organs. (When an emerald is dropped into milk, the latter gets a green hue. Similarly, the self, being pure consciousness, makes the insentient mind, body and organs sentient.)

Why people identify themselves with the body, mind, etc.

Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on Br.up.4.3.7: - -

The intellect, being transparent and next to the self, easily catches the reflection of the consciousness of the self. Therefore it is that even wise men identify themselves with the intellect first; next comes the mind which catches the reflection of the self through the intellect; then the organs through contact with the mind; and lastly, the body, through the organs. Thus the self successively illumines with its own consciousness the entire aggregate of body and organs. This is the reason why all people identify themselves with the body, mind and organs, to a greater or lesser degree, according to the extent of their discriminating capacity.

The ahamkaara or ego - sense is the internal organ (antah karana) with the reflection of consciousness init. It identifies itself with the body and sense organs and looks upon itself as a doer and an enjoyer. It assumes the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep by association with the three gunas. The waking state is the result of association with rajo guna, the dream state with sattva guna, and dreamless sleep with tamo guna, according to the commentary of Sri Jagadguru Pujya Swami Chandrasekhara Bharati of Sringeri Peetham. Though all the three qualities are present in all the three states, the particular quality mentioned above predominates in each state.

When sense objects are favourable, the person is happy. If they are not, he is unhappy. Happiness and unhappiness are the qualities of the ego and not of the atma which is ever blissful.

All objects in the world are dear only for the sake of the atma; they are not dear in themselves. But the atma is dear to everyone by itself. This sloka in Vivekachudamani (sloka 108) is based on Br. up. 2.4.5.

It is said in the Brihadaranyaka upanishad (2.4.5) that the husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, but for her own sake. The wife is dear to the husband not for the sake of the wife, but for his own sake. Everything is dear only for one's own sake. The idea is that the wife, son, wealth, etc, are dear to a person only because he derives happiness from them. The self (the person himself) is thus the real object of love and not

others. When the wife, son and others dear to a person do not act in the way he wants them to, they cease to be dear to him. Even the greatest miser will not hesitate to spend his money when that becomes necessary to save his own life from disease or danger. Attachment to wife, son and others is given up by a person when they become obstacles to the fulfillment of his own wishes. Even attachment to wealth makes way when one's own life is at stake. Attachment to the body however continues because everyone looks upon the body as himself. In order to realize the truth that he is the self or Atma which is different from the body he has to give up attachment to the body also. Attachment is the cause of all sorrow. Thus it is taught here that one should first give up attachment to wife, son, wealth and the like which are known to be external to oneself. Ultimately attachment to the body, which is looked upon, due to ignorance, as identical with oneself should also be given up by one who seeks liberation.

The atma is ever blissful. It never suffers misery. In dreamless sleep there are no sense objects, but the bliss of atma is experienced then. This is testified by perception, tradition and inference. This matter has been dealt with elaborately in Chapter11 of Panchadasi. Please see the summary of this chapter given in this website under the head 'Panchadasi'.

The causal body is taken up next. This will form the subject - matter of the next article.

Causal Body

Maya is unmanifest (avyaktam). It cannot be known through the sense - organs because it has no quality like colour, etc. It is the power of the supreme Being. If such a power is not accepted, the creation of the universe cannot be explained, since Brahman by itself is devoid of any activity. It is beginningless nescience. It is constituted of the three gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas. It can only be inferred from its effects by the wise who follow the sruti. Maya is neither real nor unreal, nor both. An unreal thing is something that is never experienced, such as the horn of a hare. Since the universe, the effect of Maya, is actually experienced, its cause cannot be unreal like the horn of a hare. At the same time, it cannot be real because it is sublimed on the attainment of self - realization. It cannot be both real and unreal, because these contradictory qualities cannot exist in the same substance at the same time. It is therefore indescribable (anirvachaniya). It is neither different nor non - different from Brahman, nor both. It is neither composed of parts nor without parts, nor both. If it has parts then it must have an origin, but it is without a beginning. If it has no parts then it cannot become modified as the universe. It is most wonderful.

Maya will cease to exist for a particular individual when he realizes the pure non - dual Brahman, just as the illusory snake disappears when its substratum, rope, is known.

Maya is made up of the three gunas, sattva, rajas andtamas. There are three powers in Maya: the power of concealing the reality (avaranasakti), the power of projecting what is not real (vikshepasakti), and the power of jnana (jnanasakti). The first two are the causes of bondage; the third leads to liberation. The first is the result of the tamas part of Maya, the second is due to the rajas part and the third is due to the sattva part. Isvara's Maya is predominantly sattvic and it is under His control. So there is no bondage for Him. The jiva's Maya is constituted of all the three gunas in different proportions and so he suffers bondage. The rajo guna is the cause of attachment, aversion, etc., in the jiva. All qualities such as desire, doubt, fear, courage, resolve, faith, lack of faith, anger, avarice, pride, jealousy etc., (both good and bad qualities) relate only to the mind and not to the atma. They are superimposed on the atma because of lack of discrimination between the mind and the atma due to ignorance. These qualities of the mind are the cause of all the activities of the jiva.

The veiling power of Maya belongs to its tamasic aspect. It is only because the reality, Brahman, is concealed by it that the projecting power of Maya is able to function and project the world and make it appear real. Thus the veiling power of Maya is the root cause of the jiva's bondage and transmigration. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami says in his commentary that even in the case of a realized person the projecting power (vikshepasakti) continues to operate as a result of praarabdha karma. Therefore he also sees the world as ordinary persons do, but he is not affected by any happenings, good or bad, because his knowledge of Brahman is not veiled and so he looks upon everything as Brahman. An example may be given to illustrate this. A child looks at a lion made of stone and runs away screaming in fear. An adult also sees it as a lion, but is not frightened because he knows that it is only stone. So it is the veiling power of Maya that is the cause of all misery.

Even a person who is learned in the scriptures does not realize the nature of the self if he is overpowered by tamo guna. He considers the world, which is only a superimposition on the self due to beginningless nescience, as real. This delusion leads to sorrow. The power of Maya to delude has been described by Sri Sankara thus in his Bhashya on Kathopanishad, 1.3.12: - "Alas, how unfathomable, inscrutable and variegated is this power of Maya, that every human being, though in reality identical with the supreme Brahman, and is told this again and again by the upanishads, does not realize that truth, but considers himself as the body, mind and senses, even though he is not told so by any one".

The veiling power of Maya produces four obstacles to knowledge in the mind of man. These are, (1) the notion that the identity of jiva and Brahman and the illusoriness of the world propounded in the upanishads cannot be correct (known as abhaavanaa), (2) the idea that the body itself is the self (viparitabhaavanaa), (3) notions contrary to the teachings (vipratipattih), and (4) doubt (asambhavana). The vikshepa sakti of Maya which projects the world as a reality keeps the man in bondage.

Ignorance, laziness, lack of discrimination, torpor, indifference, delusion, and similar negative qualities are the result of tamo guna. A person subject to these does not make any effort to uplift himself.

Sattva guna is very pure. But because of admixture with rajas and tamas transmigration results. When a person is predominantly sattvic, with only a tinge of rajas and no tamas, he is free from pride, and practices the disciplines such as yama and niyama. Such a person has faith, devotion, yearning for liberation, and divine qualities. He withdraws from the pursuit of worldly pleasures. 'Yama' has five components: non - injury, truthfulness, not coveting other's possessions, continence, and non - acceptance of gifts. 'Niyama' also has five components: purity of body and mind, contentment, austerity, study of the scriptures, and dedication of all actions to God.

When sattvaguna is uncontaminated by rajas and tamas the results are alertness of mind, experience of the self, supreme calmness, contentment, bliss, and remaining established in the supreme bliss because of which there is everlasting bliss.

The causal body made up of the three gunas is unmanifest. Dreamless sleep is its distinctive state. In this state the organs and the mind do not function. The mind remains in seed form in this state. The absence of knowledge of any kind in this state is evident from the fact that a person who wakes up from sleep says that he did not know anything.

The not-self

The physical body, the sense organs, the vital air, the mind, the ego - sense, all functions of these, all the sense - objects, pleasure, pain, etc., the five elements, the entire universe up to the un - manifested (Prakriti) - all these constitute the not - self. All this is mithya, what cannot be described as either real or unreal. These are all the effects of Maya. On the realization of Brahman these will be found to have no reality.

In Panchadasi, 6.130 Swami Vidyaranyasays: - - From the standpoint of the ordinary worldly man, Maya is real. From the standpoint of the man of realization, Maya has no existence at all. For those who try to understand it

through reasoning, Maya cannot be determined as either real or unreal; it is anirvachaniya.

Sri Sankara says in Maayaa panchakam that Maya has the capacity to make the impossible happen. It imposes on Brahman, which is eternal and devoid of parts and which is pure Consciousness, the false distinctions as the world, individual souls and God. It makes even those who have mastered all the scriptures no different from animals by tempting them with wealth and the like. It makes Brahman which is infinite bliss, pure Consciousness and non - dual, struggle in the ocean of samsaara by associating it with the body made up of the five elements. It imposes on Brahman which is devoid of qualities the distinctions of colour, caste, etc, and attachment to wife, son, possessions and the like. It creates even in non - dual Brahman distinctions such as Brahmaa, Vishnu and Siva and deludes even the learned into thinking that they are different from one another.

The question 'What is the supreme Self' will be taken up in the next article.

Supreme Self [Paramatma]

By realizing one's real nature as identical with the supreme Brahman one becomes free from the bond of samsara and attains liberation. All the effects of Maya, from Mahat to one's own body, are mithya, like a mirage. The Self is self - existent (It has no cause). It is the substratum of the ego - consciousness. It is the witness of all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep and is different from the five sheaths (which will be described later on). It illumines the experiences in the states of waking and dream and also the absence of all experiences in deep sleep. It perceives all the activities of the sense organs, but the sense organs cannot know it. It illumines the intellect, but the intellect cannot know it. It pervades the whole universe, but no object in the universe can pervade it. Everything else in this universe is insentient and attains sentiency only because of it. Because of its mere presence, the body, senses, mind and intellect perform their respective functions, as if prompted by it. This means that the Self does not itself do anything, nor does it cause the body, etc., to act. It merely provides the sentiency for them to act by its mere presence. The Self is therefore compared to the sun which provides the light for everyone to act, but is not the cause of their actions. Being of the nature of eternal consciousness, everything from theego - sense to the body, as well as all objects, all emotions such as pleasure, pain etc., are known by it. They are all objects of knowledge and the Self alone is the subject. The Self is innermost, eternal, without a beginning, of the nature of infinite bliss, is always of the same nature, and is behind every cognition. It shines in the cave of the intellect.

The Self has no birth or death; it does not increase or decrease or undergo any change; it is eternal. It is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed, just as the space inside a pot is not destroyed when the pot is destroyed. it is different from Prakriti as well as its modifications. It is pure consciousness. It illumines everything, those with form and those without form. It is devoid of all attributes. It shines in all the states of waking, dream and deep sleep as the witness of the intellect and as the basis of the ego. One should realize this self as identical with oneself by controlling the mind and making it pure. Thus one can cross this ocean of samsaara with its waves of birth and death.

The answer to the question, "What is bondage" is taken up next.

What is Bondage?

The firm belief that one is the body, senses, etc., (the not - self) is bondage. It is due to nescience, i.e. ignorance of one's real nature. It is the cause of repeated births and deaths and all sorrows. Because of it a person looks upon the unreal body as real and identifies himself with it. He nourishes the body and protects it by indulging in sense pleasures. Just as a silkworm builds a cocoon of silk threads around itself and becomes imprisoned in it, man becomes bound to his body.

(Note. When a person says 'I am stout', 'I am lean', etc, he is really referring to his body as identical with himself. When he says 'I see', 'I hear', 'I taste' and so on, he is identifying himself with his organs of seeing, hearing and tasting. When he says 'I am intelligent' or 'I am dull' he identifies himself with his intellect. All these identifications are totally wrong. The Self is ever pure, untouched by the joys or sorrows of the body and mind).

The not - self is mistaken for the self by everyone because of lack of discrimination between the two, resulting from ignorance. In sloka 140this is compared to a person mistaking a snake for a rope and taking it in his hand. The usual example of a rope being mistaken for a snake is reversed here to show how disastrous such a mistake is. A man who mistakes a snake for a rope and takes it in his hand is almost certain to be bitten by the snake and lose his life. Mistaking the body, mind, etc., for the self is pointed out to be equally dangerous because one cannot progress spiritually as long as one does not get rid of this wrong notion. Taking the not - self to be the self, i.e. identifying oneself with the body - mind complex is bondage. The concealing power of avidya conceals the atman, like Rahu concealing the sun. Because of this, people are deluded and consider themselves to be nothing other than the body, etc. This gives rise to desire, which is the cause of all misery. The man who is in the grip of the crocodile of delusion is not able to realize the real nature of the self. He drifts in the ocean of samsaara.

An example is given here. Clouds arise when the heat of the sun makes the water of the ocean evaporate. Thus the sun is the ultimate source of the clouds. The clouds conceal the very same sun from our view. At the same time, we are able to see the clouds only because of the sun behind them. Similarly, Brahman is the source of the world, and the very same world conceals Brahman from us. We are able to experience the world through our sense organs only because of the light of consciousness which is itself Brahman. Just as a wayfarer suffers when the sky is overcast and it is very cold, the man whose self is hidden from him suffers misery.

The tree of samsaara is now described. Avidya is the seed of this tree. The shoot is the wrong notion that the body is the self. Desire is the tender sprout. Karma is the water. The body is the trunk. The praanas are the wind. The contacts of the senses with the objects are the tendrils. The sense - objects are the flowers. Suffering is the fruit arising from different karmas. The experiencer is the bird on the tree which eats the fruit.

The cause of bondage is ignorance of one's real nature. This ignorance is natural to everyone and is without beginning. It continues until it is destroyed by self - knowledge. It is the cause of all suffering in the form of birth, disease, old age, death, etc. This ignorance cannot be destroyed by any missiles, nor by the wind, nor by fire, nor even by the performance of innumerable rituals laid down in the scriptures. It can be destroyed only by the sharp and beautiful sword of discrimination which arises by the grace of the Supreme Being.

But it should not be thought that the rituals laid down in the scriptures are futile. The performance of these rituals with full faith is essential for attaining purity of mind which is the prerequisite for the dawn of knowledge.

Discriminating Self from Non-self

The self is not clearly known because it is covered by five sheaths, which are superimposed on it, like the water in a pond covered by a layer of moss. When the moss is removed, the pure water becomes clearly visible and accessible. It can quench one's thirst and make him happy. Similarly, when the five sheaths are negated the indwelling self which is pure, eternal bliss, homogeneous, supreme, and self - effulgent shines unobstructed. Therefore one should discriminate between the self and the not - self and negate the not - self for attaining liberation from bondage. Realizing the self which is Existence - Consciousness - Bliss one becomes blissful.

The five sheaths are described one by one in the subsequent sections.

Five Sheaths

The three bodies of the jiva were previously named the physical or gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. Now the same three bodies are being described as five sheaths covering the atma or self within. The gross body is the first or outermost sheath. It is named annamaya kosha or the sheath of food. The subtle body is made up of three sheaths, praanamaya kosha or the sheath of vital air, manomay kosha or the sheath of the mind, and vijnaanamaya kosha or the sheath of the intellect. These sheaths have to be negated one by one in order to realize the self.

Sheath of Food

This is the physical body, known also as the gross body. It is born of food, sustained by food, and dies if there is no food. It is made up of skin, flesh, blood, and excreta. It is impure. It is always undergoing change. It has a birth and a death. It is an object of knowledge like a pot. So it cannot be the atma which, according to the upanishads, is pure, unborn, eternal, changeless, and the knower of all changes and all objects.

The body has limbs such as hands, feet, etc. One is able to live even if any of these limbs is damaged and cannot function. So the body cannot be the self which is devoid of parts and is homogeneous. It is by the light of consciousness, which is the very nature of the self, that all the limbs, the sense organs and the mind are able to function. The Kathopanishad says that it is not by the vital airs such as praana, apaana, etc., that creatures live, but by the atma which enlivens them. The vital airs themselves are insentient, like the physical body.

Because of ignorance the human being identifies himself with his body. When a person says 'I am tall, or short, or stout, or lean, etc.' he looks upon his body as himself. Such a person is not even aware that he has a subtle body which is different from the gross body and which does not die when the physical body dies, but goes to other worlds and is again born on this earth in a new body. The person who has acquired intellectual knowledge about the nature of the self from the scriptures knows that there is a subtle body which goes to other worlds and is again born on this earth in a new physical body. In normal worldly transactions he identifies himself with his physical body. But when he performs vedic rituals such as yajnas for attaining heaven, he does not identify himself with his physical body, because he knows that the physical body cannot go to heaven and that itis only the subtle body that goes to heaven after death. So he then looks upon the subtle body as himself. The man of realization, however, knows that he is not either of these bodies, but is the atma which is identical with Brahman which is devoid of all the three limitations of time, place and other objects. (See Panchadasi of Swami

Vidyaranya - - 3.35, 36, 37 - Being all - pervasive, Brahman is not limited by space. Being eternal, it is not limited by time. Since all objects in the universe are merely superimposed on Brahman, Brahman is not limited by any object, just as a rope is not limited by the illusory snake superimposed on it).

Therefore the aspirant is exhorted to give up identification with the body - mind complex and fix his mind on Brahman. As long as the scholar does not give up his identification with his body, mind, etc., there can be no question of his release from transmigratory existence even if he is most proficient in Vedanta. Mere intellectual knowledge that he is not the body, etc., but the atma is not sufficient; it has to become an actual experience. Just as one does not identify oneself with one's shadow or the reflection of the body in a mirror, etc., or with his own body seen in a dream, one should not identify oneself with his living body. Identification with the body is the root cause of all sorrows and of repeated births and deaths.

The sheath of vital air will be taken up in the next article.

Sheath of Vital Air

This sheath, known as the praanamaya - kosha, is made up of the vital air (with its five subdivisions) and the five organs of action. It permeates the sheath of food and enables it to perform all its functions. But, as already stated in the previous article, this sheath is also insentient and is enlivened only by the self. The vital air is nothing but a form of wind. So it cannot be the self.

Sheath of Mind

This sheath, known as manomaya - kosha, consists of the mind and the five organs of knowledge. It permeates the sheaths of vital air and food. It is the cause of the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. This sheath is very powerful because bondage and liberation depend on the mind. Attachment of the mind to sense objects is the cause of bondage and detachment towards them is the means to liberation. The five organs of perception bring offerings to the mind in the form of experience of sense objects. The sheath of the mind is described as the sacrificial fire, the five organs of perception as the sacrificial priests, and the sense objects are the oblations which are being continuously poured into the sacrificial fire. The vasanas in the mind are the dry fuel for the fire. If there is no fuel, there can be no lasting flame in the sacrificial altar even though the oblation, clarified butter, is continuously poured into it. Similarly if there are no vasanas, the mere presence of sense objects will not be able to produce bondage. It is the vasanas that obstruct one's spiritual progress. So it has been said that the elimination of vasanas is liberation. When the mind is functioning, as in the waking state, there is bondage in the form of

identification with the body and the sense of possession, which are the cause of sorrow. When the mind is not functioning, as in deep sleep, there is no identification with the body and so there is no experience of sorrow.

In dream there are no objects, but various objects and experiences are created by the mind. Similarly the objects in the waking state are also not real. They are only an expansion of the mind.

(Note: In this context Mandukya Karika, ch.2, verses 6 and 7 are relevant. Verse 6 says that what does not exist in the beginning and at the end is unreal. By this test things experienced in the waking state as well as those in dream are equally unreal. Verse 7 points out that the objects of the waking state are contradicted in the dream state. For example, a man goes to bed after a full meal, but soon dreams that he is extremely hungry. A man who dreams that he has eaten a hearty meal, wakes up feeling very hungry. Because of these reasons, things experienced in both the states are equally unreal. But though they are both unreal, it is admitted that there is a difference between the two. In his Bhashya on Brahma sutra 2.2.29 Sri Sankara points out that there is a difference between the dream state and the waking state. The difference consists in the perceptions in dream being sublated immediately afterwards and the other not. To a man who has woken up from sleep the objects perceived in dream never had any existence at all, for he says "I falsely imagined that I was in the company of great men. In fact, I never came in contact with great men; this delusion arose because my mind was overpowered by sleep". But an object seen in the waking state, such as a pillar, is not thus sublated under any condition. Moreover, dream vision is a kind of remembrance, whereas the visions of the waking state are forms of perception. The difference between remembrance and perception, consisting in the absence and presence of objects, is well known).

In the state of dreamless sleep nothing is experienced because the mind is dormant. This further establishes that the mind is the creator of objects in dream and waking. Clouds are brought together by the wind and they are also dispersed by the wind. Similarly both bondage and liberation are brought about by the mind. The mind creates attachment for all objects including one's own body and binds a man. Later the same mind creates aversion for objects by reminding him of their harmful nature and leads the person to liberation. The mind is the cause of bondage when it has a preponderance of rajo guna. When the mind becomes free from rajas and tamas it leads to liberation. The mind becomes capable of leading to liberation if firm discrimination and strong dispassion are cultivated. So one who seeks liberation should cultivate these qualities. The mind is like a ferocious tiger which roams about n the forest of sense - objects. The wise person should restrain the mind from roaming about in this forest. It is the mind that produces the experiences of sense - objects and creates all kinds of

distinction such as body, varna, ashrama, causes and effects.

The jiva is in reality the pure consciousness which is free from all attachment, but the mind makes him forget his real nature and identify himself with the body, mind, senses and vital airs. As a result he looks upon himself as an agent and an enjoyer with the notions of 'I' and 'mine'. Avidya by itself cannot cause bondage without the association of the mind. Attachment to the body, etc., is not there in deep sleep even though avidya is present, because the mind does not function then. As the mind is the cause of samsaara, the enlightened persons have declared that the mind itself is avidya. It is by the mind that all jivas are tossed about like clouds by the wind. Therefore one who seeks liberation should purify his mind by ridding it of desire, greed, anger, and all other such emotions. When the mind is pure liberation becomes as clear as a fruit in the palm of the hand. After getting rid of all attachments the seeker should resort to sravana, manana, and nididhyaasana (hearing of the scriptures, reflection and meditation) with faith. This will cleanse the mind of rajo guna.

The sheath of the mind cannot be the self because it has a beginning and an end, is always undergoing changes, is of the nature of sorrow, and is an object of knowledge. The self is always the subject and never an object.

Sheath of Intellect

The intellect (buddhi) along with the five organs of sense, the modifications of the mind (vrittis), and the notion of agency is known as the sheath of the intellect (vijnaanamaya kosha). Because of the reflection of pure consciousness in it this sheath appears to have consciousness. Like the earlier sheaths, this sheath is also a modification of prakriti, since it is a product of the five subtle elements. It is characterized by knowledge and action. It is the cause of the identification of the jiva with his body and organs. It is beginningless because creation is beginningless. It performs various actions, good and bad, prompted by its vaasanas. The states of waking and dream and the experiences of joy, sorrow, etc., belong to it. (In these statements this sheath is identified with the subtle body of which it forms a part.) Because of the identification of the Atma with this sheath, the qualities of the latter are wrongly attributed to the Atma, just as fire is said to be long or round according to the shape of the iron rod or ball which has been made red - hot.

It has been said above that the sheath of the intellect, which is the limiting adjunct of the Atma, is beginningless. The question arises, whether it is also endless, in which case, no liberation would be possible. The answer is that this limitation and the consequent identification with the sheath are only due to delusion caused by ignorance. The Atma is unattached, actionless and

formless. It can have no connection with the objects of the world, just as blueness has really no connection with the sky. Jivahood continues only as long as there is delusion born of ignorance. When the delusion ceases on the destruction of ignorance by knowledge, the jivahood ceases and there is only Atma or Brahman.

Though avidya is beginningless, it has an end. When right knowledge arises, avidya ceases to exist. The knowledge that the jivatma is none other than the Paramatma (Brahman) is what is called right knowledge.

Justas water is not clear when it is associated with mud, but becomes clear when the mud is removed, the Atma is realized in its pure state when the taint of identification with the body - mind complex is removed.

The sheath of the intellect cannot be the Atma because it is subject to change, is insentient, is limited, is an object of perception and is not constant, being dormant in deep sleep.

Sheath of Bliss

The sheath of bliss (anandamaya kosha) is the modification of avidya in the form of the happiness which is experienced in the waking and dream states. In these two states the happiness arises on the attainment of some desired object. This sheath is fully manifested in the state of deep sleep. But even this sheath is not the Atma because it is also a modification of avidya.

When all the five sheaths are thus eliminated one by one, what remains is pure consciousness, which is the Atma.

The Atma which is self - effulgent, distinct from the five sheaths, the unchanging witness of the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, which is always of the nature of bliss, and is not tainted by the defects of the sheaths, is to be realized as one's self.

The disciple now raises a doubt - - when all the five sheaths are eliminated there appears to be only void. So what is there to be realized as the self?

The guru answers that there is an entity that is the witness of the presence as well as the absence of these sheaths and their modifications. This witness is the self.

The self or Atma shines in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is behind the awareness as 'I'. It is the witness of the ego - sense and of the functioning of all the organs. It is self - effulgent, eternal and bliss itself.

A person of dull intellect thinks that the reflection of the sun in a pot of water is the sun itself. Similarly, human beings, being deluded by avidya (nescience), think that the reflection of pure consciousness in the mind is the Atma. A wise man knows that the sun in the sky is different from the pot, the water in the pot and the reflection, and that the sun illumines all the three of them. Similarly the Atma is different from the mind and the reflection of consciousness in it and it illumines them. The Atma has therefore to be realized as different from the body, mind and organs, as self - luminous, eternal, infinite, extremely subtle, and identical with Brahman. On this realization the person becomes liberated from transmigratory existence. The realization of one's real nature as Brahman is the only means to liberation.

Unreal (Mithya) Nature of the Universe

Brahman is absolute existence and pure consciousness. It is infinite, pure, supreme, self - luminous, of the nature of eternal bliss, non - different from the indwelling self, and without parts.

It is the only reality. The universe which is superimposed on it is not different from it, just as the illusory snake is not different from the rope on which it appears. A pot made of clay is not different from the clay. There is no separate entity as pot apart from clay. The pot is only a name given to clay in a particular shape. When the same clay is given another shape it is given the name 'plate'. So what really exists is only clay, and names such as pot are imaginary. The Chandogya Upanishad, 6.1.4says, "All modification (of clay) is nothing but name based on words; the clay alone is real". Similarly everything that is the effect of Brahman is nothing but Brahman. The appearance of the universe as an entity separate from Brahman is due only to delusion caused by nescience. The Mundaka upanishad declares that this universe is nothing but the supreme Brahman. If the universe were real, the statement in the srutis that Brahman is infinite would become invalid, the Vedas would lose their authority and Isvara's words would become untrue. Such a result is not acceptable. If the world is real it should appear in dreamless sleep also. As it is not at all perceived in dreamless sleep, it is unreal like objects seen in dream. Therefore it is clear that the universe does not exist apart from Brahman.

Therefore the supreme Brahman is the only reality. It is pure consciousness, without beginning or end, and devoid of any activity. It is pure eternal bliss. It is free from all differences brought about by Maya. It is eternal, unchanging, pure, beyond the faculty of reasoning, formless, subtle, and self - effulgent. It is beyond the trichotomy of knower, knowledge and known. It is beyond mind and speech.

The explanation of the maha vakya "That thou art" will be taken up in the next article.

Maha Vakya "That thou art"

In the sentence 'tat tvam asi' the primary meaning of the word 'tat' is Brahman as qualified by the functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, that is, Isvara. The primary meaning of the word 'tvam' is the jiva as qualified by the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. The qualities of Isvara and jiva are totally contradictory, like those of the sun and the glow - worm, or the king and a servant, or the ocean and a well, or the earth and an atom. Isvara is omniscient and omnipotent while the jiva's knowledge and power are limited. The identity affirmed by the maha vakya cannot obviously be between Isvara and jiva which are the primary meanings of the words. Therefore the implied meanings of the two words have to be taken. The contradiction between the primary meanings of the two words is due to the limiting adjuncts which are not real. Maya is the limiting adjunct (upadhi) of Isvara, while the upadhi of the jiva is the five sheaths. When these limiting adjuncts are negated, there is neither Isvara nor jiva. The kingdom is the symbol of the king and the shield is the symbol of the warrior. When these are removed there is neither king nor warrior. The sruti negates the duality imagined in Brahman. The negation of the limiting adjuncts is to be effected by reasoning supported by sruti. Everything in the universe is a superimposition on Brahman by ignorance and has no reality, like the snake superimposed on a rope. The entire universe must therefore be rejected as unreal. Then what remains is only Brahman . Thus both Isvara and jiva are found to be only Brahman when the unreal upadhis are rejected.

Thus only the implied meanings of the terms 'tat' and 'tvam are to be taken for affirming their identity. The implied meanings of words are of three kinds - jahal lakshanaa, ajahal - lakshanaa and jahad ajahal lakshanaa.

jahal lakshanaa - (exclusive secondary signification) - The literal meaning is to be rejected and some other meaning consistent with it is to be adopted. An example is - gangaayaam ghoshah, the literal meaning of which is - a hamlet on the river Ganga. Since there cannot be a hamlet on the river itself, it is the bank of the river that is meant. Here the literal meaning of the word 'Ganga' has to be given up completely and the implied meaning 'bank' has to be adopted.

ajahal lakshanaa - (non - exclusive secondary signification) - Without giving up the literal meaning of the word, what is implied by it is also adopted to get the meaning intended to be conveyed. An example is - "The red is running", which is intended to convey that the red horse is running. Here the literal meaning of the word 'red' is retained and the implied word 'horse' is added to get the correct sense of the sentence.

jahad ajahal lakshanaa - (exclusive - non - exclusive secondary signification) - Here a part of the literal meaning is retained and the other part discarded. The sentence "This is that Devadatta" is interpreted by using this lakshanaa. The meaning intended to be conveyed by this sentence is that Devadatta who is seen at the present time in this place is the same as the person who was seen earlier in another place. The literal meaning of the word 'this' is Devadatta associated with the present time and place. The literal meaning of the word 'that' is Devadatta associated with the past time and some other place. Since this sentence purports to convey the identity of the person seen in different places at different times, we get this meaning by discarding the reference to the place and time conveyed by the words 'this' and 'that' and retaining the reference to Devadatta. This is also known as bhaagatyaaga - lakshanaa. The meaning of the sentence tat tvam asi is obtained by using this method. Just as in the sentence "This is that Devadatta" the identity is stated by rejecting the contradictory qualities, so also in the sentence "That thou art" the contradictory qualities (namely, the limiting adjuncts) are rejected. Thus it follows that the jiva and Brahman are in essence one when the limiting adjuncts, namely Maya and the five sheaths, are rejected.

Meditation on Brahman

The identity of the jiva and Brahman has been affirmed by the maha vakya 'That thou art'. Now Brahman is being described negatively, in order that the disciple may give up his identification with the gross body. Brahman is not gross, not short, not long, and has no attributes whatsoever. It is infinite pure consciousness. It can be realized only by a mind which has been disciplined by reflection and meditation. Justas any object made of clay is nothing but clay, the entire universe, which is an effect of Brahman, is nothing but Brahman. There is nothing other than Brahman. The guru tells the disciple, "You are that supreme Brahman, ever full of peace, free from blemish, and without a second". The place, time, objects, and their knower, appearing in a dream are all 'mithya'. They have no reality. Similarly, the world experienced in the waking state is nothing but a projection of one's own nescience. Consequently, the body, senses, ego, are all unreal.

The disciple is now asked to meditate that he is Brahman which is devoid of distinctions such as caste, lineage, etc., is free from the limitations of name and form, and is beyond space, time and objects of sense. He should meditate that, being himself none other than Brahman; he is not affected by the six waves - hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death. Brahman cannot be apprehended by the senses. It cannot be known by the intellect. Brahman is the substratum of the universe which is superimposed on it by ignorance. Since it is not a substance, it cannot be described either as existent or as non - existent. It is existence itself. Everything in this world appears to exist only because they are all superimposed on Brahman which

is existence, just as the illusory snake appears to exist only because the substratum, rope, exists. It is indivisible. Brahman does not have birth, growth, change, decay, disease and death. All these are only for the body - mind complex, but they are wrongly attributed to the Atma which is the same as Brahman. Brahman is the cause of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe.

Brahman is free from the three kinds of difference. The difference of a tree from its leaves, flowers, fruits, etc, is the difference within an object. This is known as svagata bheda. The difference of one tree from another tree is the difference between objects of the same species. This is known as sajaatiiya bheda. The difference of a tree from a rock is the difference between objects of different species. This is known as vijaatiiya bheda. None of these differences exists with regard to Brahman, because there is nothing else of the same species or of a different species and there is no internal difference because Brahman is homogeneous. This is what is affirmed in the Chhaandogya upanishad (6.2.1) by the words "ekam evaadvitiyam" - one, only, without a second. The word "one' negates sajaatiiya bheda, the word 'only' negates svagata bheda and the words 'without a second' negate vijaatiiya bheda.

Brahman is motionless like a wave less ocean. It is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. It is ever free from bondage. It is the cause of multiplicity as the substratum, but is itself causeless. It is however only from the empirical standpoint that it is said to be the cause of multiplicity. From the absolute standpoint the multiplicity does not exist and so Brahman cannot be described as a cause. It is neither cause nor effect. The aspirant should meditate on Brahman thus.

Brahman should be meditated on as devoid of internal variety, infinite, imperishable, different from the world as well as from Maya, supreme, eternal, of un - diminishing bliss, and not tainted by avidya. Brahman appears as name, form, quality, and action because of delusion, but is really free from change, just as gold, though appearing in the form of various ornaments, is itself always the same. Thus the name, form, etc., are unreal and they are all nothing but Brahman .

There is nothing before or after Brahman, because Brahman is infinite. It is devoid of activity. It is higher than the highest. It is the indwelling self of the jiva. It is un - decaying.
If one meditates on Brahman in this manner with conviction, he will attain to the truth.

In this way, one should merge the whole universe in Brahman and realize himself as pure consciousness.

In the cave of the intellect dwells the supreme non - dual Brahman which is the ultimate reality and is different from all gross and subtle substances. One who identifies himself with this Brahman will not have any further birth.

Remaining Established as Brahman

Even after a person has acquired from the scriptures and by reasoning the knowledge that he is distinct from the five sheaths and is identical with Brahman, the beginningless vaasanaas which make him look upon himself as an agent and enjoyer, which are the cause of transmigration, remain strong. These have to be removed with effort by turning the senses away from external objects and fixing the mind on Brahman. The sages say that liberation is the elimination of vaasanaas. The wise man should get rid of the notions of 'I' and 'mine' with regard to the not - self in the form of the body and senses by being firmly established in the self. Realizing your innermost self, the witness of the intellect and its modifications, by means of the modification of the intellect in the form 'I am Brahman' give up the notion of 'I - ness' in the not - self. Give up concerns about conforming to the ways of the world and concerns about your own body; give up reading books other than those useful for the attainment of liberation. By these means get rid of identification with the body, etc.

(In sloka 271 the Acharya says that 'lokaanuvartanam', 'dehaanuvartanam' and saastraanuvartanam' should be given up. These three are referred to aslokavaasanaa, dehavaasanaa and saastravaasanaa by Svami Vidyaranya in Jivanmuktiviveka. What he says there is reproduced below: - -

Impure vaasana is of three kinds: desire for (unblemished reputation in) the world (loka vaasana), obsession with learning (sasstra vaasana) and undue attachment to the body (deha vaasana). The first one takes the form 'I want to be always praised by everyone'. This is called impure because it is something impossible of achievement. No one, however good, can always escape slander. Even absolutely blemishless Sita was slandered. People speak ill of others merely because of local peculiarities. The southern Brahman as censor the northerners, well - versed in the Vedas, as meat - eaters. The northern Brahmanas retaliate by ridiculing the southern custom of marrying the daughter of a maternal uncle and for carrying earthenware during travel. A pure man is looked upon as a devil, a clever man as presumptuous, a man of forbearance as weak, a strong man as cruel, an absent - minded man as a thief, and a handsome man as lewd. Thus nobody can please everyone. So the scriptures advise us to treat censure and praise alike.

The obsession with learning (sastra vasana) is of three kinds: addiction to study, addiction to many scriptural texts and obsession with the mechanical observance of injunctions with regard to the performance of rituals. The first

only is exemplified by sage Bharadvaja, who was not satisfied with having devoted three successive lives to the study of the Vedas and continued the same in his fourth life also. This is also an impure vasana because it is not possible of achievement. Indra cured him of this by explaining to him the impossibility of his undertaking and initiated him into the knowledge of the conditioned Brahman for the attainment of a higher end.

Addiction to many scriptural texts is also an impure vasana because it is not the highest aim. The example for this is Durvaasaa. Once he went with a cart - load of scriptural works to Lord Mahadeva. Narada ridiculed him by comparing him to a donkey carrying a huge load. Durvaasaa became angry and threw away the books into the ocean. Lord Mahadeva then imparted to him the knowledge of the Self which does not come from study alone.

Obsession with injunctions relating to the performance of rites is exemplified by Nidaagha, as described in Vishnu purana. Another example of this is Daasura who, because of the intensity of his desire to adhere to the injunctions, could not find any place in the whole world pure enough for the performance of rites. This mad desire for performing karma is also an impure vaasanaa because it results in the person continuing in the cycle of repeated birth and death. Saastra vaasanaa is also impure for another reason, namely, that it is the cause of vanity.

Deha vaasanaa is of three kinds - - looking upon the body as the Self, concern about making the body attractive and desire to remove defects in the body. The first two are clearly impure vaasanaas because they are obstacles to spiritual progress. The third is impossible of achievement because the body is essentially impure and so it is also an impure vaasanaa).

As long as these three vaasanaas are there, knowledge of the Self cannot arise. They are like iron fetters binding the legs.

If a sandal - stick remains in water for a long time, its natural fragrance remains hidden. But if it is rubbed and the external odour is removed, then its natural fragrance emerges in full measure. Similarly, the fragrance of the Self which remains hidden because of the dirt in the form of the vaasanaas, emerges when the vaasanaas are removed by 'rubbing' with wisdom. The aatma vaasanaa which has remained obscured by the anaatma vaasanaas (loka vaasanaa, saastra vaasanaa and deha vaasanaa) shines forth when the anaatma vaasanaas are destroyed by concentrating the mind on the aatman.

Note. Gita, 5.15 says that knowledge is covered by ignorance and so all creatures are deluded. The jiva is identical with Brahman and so knowledge is his very nature. But this is obscured by ignorance. Kathopanishad, 2.1.1 says that the creator has made the senses go only outward and so they

cannot know the indwelling self. But a rare human being withdraws his senses from external objects and concentrates his mind on the self and realizes that he is Brahman).

The more the mind is concentrated on the self, the more the vaasanaas relating to the not - self are destroyed. When all the vaasanaas are destroyed the realization that one is the pure Brahman is perfect. When it is always established in the self, the mind is stilled. This means that the mind gives up likes and dislikes and remains calm whatever happens. Vaasanaas are the propensity of the mind to react to situations by the rise of anger and other similar emotions without any consideration of the consequences. When the mind becomes calm it means that the raajasic and taamasic vaasanaas have been eliminated. In this way the superimposition of the not - self on the self should be removed.

The taamasic qualities such as drowsiness and laziness are destroyed by raajasic qualities such as activity. The raajasic qualities are eliminated by the cultivation of sattva guna by concentration of the mind. Ultimately one should go beyond sattva guna also by concentrating the mind on nirguna Brahman. Convinced that the praarabdha karma will protect the body, with a mind which is not affected even when some cause for worry arises, one should strive with courage for the removal of super - imposition.

One should get rid of superimposition by distinguishing between the self and the body - mind complex and by the knowledge of the sruti statements such as 'tat tvam asi' which declare the oneness of Brahman and the Atman. This process should be continued till the awareness of the jiva and the universe becomes as false as a dream to one who has woken up from sleep. The Atman should be constantly meditated on. As the space in a pot is dissolved in the universal space, the individual self should be dissolved in Brahman. Like an actor discarding his role after the play is over, one should dissociate oneself from the gross and subtle bodies and remain as the pure Self. That which is signified by the word 'I' is the witness of the ego, etc. It is found to exist even in deep sleep. The sruti says that it is unborn and eternal. Identification with one's family, clan, name, and station in life, all of which relate to the gross body should be given up. Similarly the qualities of the subtle body such as agency should also be given up. The ego is the root cause of samsaara and is the first to be superimposed on the self.